

KALYANA KALPATARU



Gita-Tattva
Number II

249

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Kalyana-Kalpataru

Gita-Tattva Number—II

August 1947

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A Scheme for Popularizing Gita

"Gita Study Circle"

An Appeal

That the recitation and study of *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* bring untold blessings in their train will be borne out by many from their personal experience. The above organization is being set up with a view to encouraging the largest number of people to undertake the recitation and study of the *Gītā*. It will have no office-bearers nor will it hold any periodical sittings. The whole of its business will be transacted by the "Gītā-Pārāyaṇa-Prachāra" section of the 'Kalyan' office. Every intending member of this organization will be required to fill the following form and will be expected to carry out the two pledges mentioned therein. We humbly appeal to all the readers of the 'Kalyana-Kalpataru' to enrol themselves as members of this organization and earn the divine blessings for themselves as well as for others by inducing as many people as possible to enrol themselves. According to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, this project comes under the category of a Jñāna-Yajña or intellectual sacrifice; hence it behoves everybody to participate in it.

अध्येष्यते च य इमं धर्म्यं संवादमावयोः ।

ज्ञानयज्ञेन तेनाहमिष्टः स्यामिति मे मतिः ॥

"And he who will study this sacred dialogue of ours, by him shall I be worshipped through an intellectual sacrifice. Such is My mind." (XVIII. 70)

I seek to be enrolled as a member of the "Gita Study Circle" and shall endeavour to redeem the two pledges mentioned below:—

1. I shall complete at least 108 recitations of the *Gītā* myself in course of a year.
2. I shall enlist at least one fresh member in course of a year. (If I fail to enlist a new member I shall undertake 108 more recitations of the *Gītā*.)

Signature.....Name in full.....

Caste or nationality.....Age.....

Residence.....Post Office.....

Date.....

- Note:—1. From whichever date the recitation may be started, 108 recitations should be completed before the Gita-Jayanti day, viz., the 10th of the bright half of Mārgaśīrṣa.
2. Printed forms of this pattern can be sent for from the office or they can be copied out and got filled by prospective members.
3. Those who cannot read the original text in Sanskrit may read its translation in any other language. It is proposed to open a new section for the members of this category. Ladies can enrol themselves in this section.

Kalyana-Kalpataru

The Beloved of the Devotees



“Constantly chanting My names and glories and striving for My realization, and bowing again and again to Me, those devotees of firm resolve, ever united with Me through meditation, worship Me with single-minded devotion.”

(IX. 14.)

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

Kalyana Kalpataru



He who seeth Me everywhere, and seeth everything in Me,
Of him will I never lose hold, and he shall never lose hold of Me.

(Bhagavadgītā VI. 30)

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प्रपन्नपारिजाताय तोत्रवेत्रैकपाणये ।

ज्ञानमुद्राय कृष्णाय गीतामृतदुहे नमः ॥

“Obeisance to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is a veritable wish-yielding tree to those who take refuge in Him, who holds a whip of cane in one of His hands, and has raised the other in a posture which is generally adopted by men of wisdom while imparting spiritual knowledge (and in which the tips of the thumb and the index finger are joined and the other fingers kept apart from each other) and who has milked the nectar of the Gītā from the Upaniṣads as it were.”

Compatibility of the Different Interpretations of the Gita

~~~~~By Hanumanprasad Poddar

Once the celestials, the mortals and the demons called on Brahmā, the lord of creation, for instruction as disciples and began to observe the rules of Brahmacharya (total abstinence from all forms of sexual indulgence). Having completed their vow of continence the gods, first of all, approached the lord of creation and sought instruction from him. Brahmā responded to their appeal by simply uttering the syllable 'Da' and then asked the celestials if they had understood what he meant by his cryptic message. The gods replied that they had understood his meaning. "The heavenly regions abound in luxuries", they said. "Gratification of the senses is believed to be the chief pleasure of the celestial sphere. Enjoying perpetual youth, the gods are ever steeped in sensuality. Having regard to our life of luxury, and with a view to urging us on the path of virtue you have asked us to practise Dama (control over the senses)." "You have correctly understood me," replied the lord of creation. "This is what I asked you to do."

The human beings were the next to approach the lord of creation and seek instruction from him. Brahmā repeated the same syllable 'Da' to them as well, and enquired if they had grasped the meaning of his instruction. The mortals, who are fond of accumulation, said, "Lord, we have followed you. [Belonging to a species which is given to activity and actuated by greed, we are ever engaged in performing actions and amassing riches. Having due regard to our situation and for our own

good] you have asked us to practise Dāna (charity)." Pleased with their answer the lord of creation said, "Yes, this is what I sought to convey to you. You have correctly understood me."

Lastly, the demons approached the lord of creation and sought his instruction. Brahmā uttered the same syllable 'Da' to them also, and then enquired if they had grasped the meaning of his instruction. The demons replied, "Lord! We have understood you. [We are by our very nature exceedingly cruel and bloody. Fury and violence are our daily companions. In order to reclaim us from this sin and put us on the right path] you have asked us to be compassionate to all creatures." "You have correctly understood me," replied the lord of creation. "This is my instruction to you."

The syllable 'Da' is the same for all. But Brahmā (the Creator) had three different senses in his mind while delivering it to his disciples of three different grades; and it was but meet for him to have adopted this method. Herein lies the greatness of the word of God. Though finite in form, it has a universal appeal and shows different paths to the various seekers of the world according to the respective stage of their spiritual evolution. All these paths lead to the same goal, viz., the attainment of the supreme Abode of God, or God-Realization.

Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā is the direct word of God. As such it embodies all the

scriptures, and bringing every soul to the path which is just appropriate for him and raising his spiritual level it urges him on to blessedness wherever he may be placed and from whatever direction he may proceed. Goads men with different predispositions and belonging to different spiritual levels to duties suited to their predilections and qualifications it sets them on the godward path. That is why even pure-hearted souls have viewed it in different lights and also interpreted it in different ways. The greatness and uniqueness of the divine word lies in the fact that lending itself to various interpretations it brings beatitude to all,—even as the embodied form of the Lord, when open to the perception of all, is perceived by different individuals in a different light according to their own mental outlook. Therefore, one need not be astonished to find dissimilarity in the interpretations of the Gītā.

It is from this point of view that Āchāryas and saints of blessed memory, who had directly perceived the meaning of the Gītā, chose to write glosses and commentaries on the same for the benefit of the world. Finding disagreement among them one should not feel tempted or inclined to draw comparison between them or speak disparagingly of any of them. Whatever has been written by those great souls is entirely true and logical so far as their own realization goes, and is intended for our spiritual benefit. One should reverently and faithfully follow that interpretation which is liked by one and evokes one's reverence. The goal, viz., Truth or God is one; the paths are many; and their diversity is absolutely justifiable and essential. Āchārya Puṣpadanta has rightly said in his celebrated "Mahimna-Stotra"

(hymn of praise to Lord Śiva):—

"Lord! You are the goal of all men following diverse paths, straight or winding, due to diversity of leaning, even as the ocean is the goal of all rivers."

Hundreds of glosses, commentaries, treatises and expositions on and renderings of the Gītā have been written and are being written in the various languages of the world. Such of them as have been written by practicers endowed with divine virtues, discrimination, dispassion and purity of heart, and exclusively devoted to God, or by God-realized souls are all correct and deserving of reverential study as throwing light on the divine word, irrespective of their mutual differences or of the language in which they have been written. It is through the grace of these high-souled commentators and expositors that we are able to follow to some extent the teachings of the Gītā today. The most important of these glosses and commentaries are written in the Sanskrit language. Commentaries written by Āchāryas and scholars who preceded Śāṅkara are no longer available; but it appears much was written on the subject even before Śāṅkara. Of the available glosses and commentaries some were written by the principal Āchāryas themselves, and others by their learned followers. Although there are many schools of metaphysical thought deserving of our respect, the following six are the principal schools on which the various glosses and commentaries existing on the Gītā take their stand:—

1. The Monism of Āchārya Śāṅkara,
2. The Qualified Monism of Āchārya Rāmānuja,
3. The Dualism of Āchārya Madhva,

4. The Dualistic Monism of Āchārya Nimbārka,
5. The Pure Monism of Āchārya Vallabha,
6. Śrī Chaitanya's Doctrine of Inscrutable Diversity-cum-Unity.

Bare outlines of the above schools are given below:—

### MONISM

*Creed.* Here the totality of existence has been divided into two principal categories, viz., subject and object. The eternal and conscious self or cognizing principle is called the 'subject' or spirit; while that which is cognized is known as the 'object' or matter. The spirit is real, eternal, untainted, static, attributeless, changeless, formless, free from attachment, immutable, one without a second and ageless. The whole cosmic order from Buddhi (Cosmic Intelligence) down to the gross elements has, really speaking, no connection with the Spirit. It has no reality as a matter of fact; it is due to Avidyā (or nescience) that the soul has identified itself with the body and senses etc., which are all unreal, and conceives itself as a god or a human being, a Brahman (a member of the priestly class) or a Śūdra (a member of the labouring class), learned or ignorant, happy or miserable, a doer and an enjoyer etc. This identification of the Spirit with Buddhi (the principle of intelligence) is known as 'Adhyāsa'. It is this 'Adhyāsa', born of nescience, which makes the totality of phenomenal existence appear as real. It is Māyā or illusion which lends reality and diversity to this objective world; in reality there is one indivisible pure and enlightened eternally taintless conscious Self, which is knowledge and bliss solidified. This doctrine is variously termed as 'Vivartavāda', 'Adhyāsavāda' and 'Māyāvāda'.

*Conception of Mukti.* Jñāna or Wisdom is nothing else than the realization of one indivisible eternally pure and enlightened Self, which is truth, knowledge and bliss solidified; while Ajñāna or ignorance consists in cognizing diversity as real, losing sight of this one indivisible Self, which is the substratum of all and lends reality to all. Just as earthen vessels of various kinds are really nothing else than clay, gold ornaments of various designs are all gold, the diverse phenomena seen in a dream are the same as the dreaming person, and the eddies and waves etc. seen in water are all identical with water, in the same way this universe appearing in various forms is nothing but the pure and enlightened Brahma (Absolute), which is our own self. True knowledge of this kind goes by the name of wisdom. As soon as this realization takes place the world as such altogether ceases; and 'Adhyāsa', born of nescience, being wiped out by true knowledge, the Jīva or embodied soul is rid of its Jīvahood or ego and, though still embodied in the eyes of the world, is liberated during its very embodied existence. This is what they call Jñāna or wisdom. So long as the Jīva does not attain this wisdom, its knots of Avidyā do not get untied and it does not secure freedom from the unreal ties of the world consisting of birth and death.

*Practice.* Śravaṇa (hearing), Manana (reflection) and Nididhyāsana (contemplation) are the three direct means of attaining this wisdom. They can be practised only when one develops a keen desire to know the Self. And such a keen desire does not appear so long as the heart does not get thoroughly purified. Disinterested performance of duties enjoined by one's grade in society and stage in life and practice

of devotion to God are necessary for attaining purity of heart. Through these practices man attains Viveka (discrimination), Vairāgya (dispassion), the six accomplishments (Ṣaṭ Sampatti) in the shape of Śama (control of mind), Dama (control of the senses), Titikṣā (endurance), Uparati (quietism), Śraddhā (reverence) and Samādhāna (composure), and Mumukṣutva or the craving for liberation. Then alone does one develop a passion for Self-Knowledge. A true seeker of Self-Knowledge and an enlightened man of wisdom both are actually required to renounce all actions. True knowledge of Self and liberation in this very life can be attained through the practice of Śravaṇa, Manana and Nididhyāsana only when one has renounced all actions after attaining purity of heart.

### QUALIFIED MONISM

*Creed.* Brahma or the Supreme is one and comprises three entities, viz., Achit or inert Matter, Chit or the Conscious Self and Īśvara or God. Brahma qualified by the gross and the subtle, i. e., Matter and Spirit, is Īśvara. He is qualified and endowed with attributes. The energy or potency of Brahma is Māyā. Brahma is the universal Lord; everything exists for Him. He is worth adoring through all activities; He is the dispenser of all fruits, and the sustainer and creator of all objects. Spirit and Matter as well as all material substances constitute His body. Īśvara or God is the Creator, the Ruler and the inner controller of all, and is the abode of all blessed qualities. He is an ocean of boundless compassion, beauty, amiability, affection, magnanimity and power. Para, Vyūha, Vibhava, Antaryāmi and Archavatāra are His five manifestations. He is endowed with four arms and wields a conch, a discus, a mace and a lotus in them. He is accompanied by His three divine consorts, Śrī (the goddess of prosperity), Bhū (the goddess presiding over the

earth); and Līlā (the goddess presiding over the divine play).

The cosmos and the Jīva (the individual soul) constitute the bodies of Brahma. The world is material. Brahma is both the material and efficient cause of the universe; and it is He who has taken the form of the universe. Nevertheless, He is free from all change. The Jīva is conscious and atomic in size. Brahma and the individual soul are not two distinct categories nor do they belong to some common species. They are distinct from one another even as a part is distinct from the whole. While Brahma is complete in Himself, the Jīva or individual soul is not so complete. Brahma is the Master, the Jīva is His servitor. Brahma is the Cause, the Jīva is an effect. Both God and the individual soul are self-luminous; they are the seats of knowledge and are spiritual in essence. The individual soul is eternal and its essential character is also eternal. There are different souls in different bodies. The Jīva is naturally immune from sorrow. It goes through pleasurable or painful experiences on account of its contact with Matter. There are many varieties of Jīvas. This doctrine is known by the name of Pariṇāmavāda or the Doctrine of Mutation.

*Conception of Mukti.* Mukti is nothing else than attainment of the service of God. The *summum bonum* of human life is to obtain the service of the Lord with His divine consorts Śrī, Bhū and Līlā, in His supreme Abode known as Vaikuṇṭha. Mukti is no other than being rid of a material body and attaining the nearness of Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa through an immaterial or incorporeal body. The Jīva can never attain oneness with God. For the Jīva is eternal in essence; it is an eternal servitor and eternally atomic in size. It can never be all-pervading. Attaining the eternal service of the Lord, who is the repository of all



blessed qualities, liberated souls enjoy divine bliss in Vaikuṇṭha.

*Practice.* Bhakti (Devotion), and not Jñāna (Self-Knowledge) is the means of attaining Mukti or liberation. No Mukti can follow from the knowledge of identity of the soul with Brahma. Liberation takes place only when God, pleased with our Bhakti, confers Mukti on us. The best form of Bhakti is Prapatti or self-surrender to God. It is only on surrendering oneself to the all-pervading Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa, that the Jiva attains supreme peace.

### DUALISM

*Creed.* Bhagavān Viṣṇu is the supreme Reality. He is qualified and endowed with attributes. He is the Creator, the Sustainer and the Destroyer—all in one. Both the individual soul and God are in essence Truth, Knowledge and Bliss combined. God is omniscient and the seat of divine and blessed qualities. He is not limited by time and space. He is unbounded, infinite and independent. The Jiva, on the other hand, is atomic in size; it is a servant of God and is deluded by Māyā, fettered and entirely dependent from time without beginning. It is the seat of ignorance and other diverse attributes. The world actually exists and diversity is real. Diversity, again, is of five kinds: (1) diversity of the individual soul with Brahma, (2) diversity of the individual soul with Matter, (3) diversity of God with Matter, (4) diversity of one individual soul with another, and (5) diversity of one material substance from another. All these diversities are real, none of them is assumed. All individual souls are subject to the control of God. The Jivas too have different grades. The

world is real, material and dependent; God is the controller of the universe. This doctrine is also known by the name of 'Swatantrāswatantravāda' or the Doctrine which postulates two ultimate realities, one of which is dependent on another.

*Conception of Mukti.* There is no such thing as Jivanmukti (liberation in this very life) or Nirvāṇa-Mukti (Liberation in the form of perfect and perpetual calm). The divine Abode of God is attained and His divine essence realized only on realizing His attributes, i.e., on acquiring the knowledge of His boundless and infinite power, energy and virtues and only after one has obtained true knowledge of all gross and subtle realities, i.e., when one has realized that the individual soul is entirely different from God. This is what they call Liberation. Even a liberated soul ever continues to be a servant of God.

*Practice.* Bhakti alone is the principal means of attaining Liberation. Study of the Vedas, control over the senses, renunciation of luxury, giving up hope and fear, offering oneself to God, speaking truthful, agreeable and wholesome words and reading sacred books, bestowing gifts, giving relief to a creature in distress, protecting one who seeks protection, showing compassion to others, aspiring to obtain the service of God and cultivating faith in God, one's preceptor and the scriptures—practising all these as an offering to God is called Bhakti.

### DUALISTIC MONISM

*Creed.* Brahma is omnipotent, changeless and devoid of attributes. The creation, maintenance and dissolution of countless millions of universes proceed from Brahma alone. Brahma is both the efficient and material cause of this universe. There are

four stages of unfoldment of the truth called Brahma. (1) The first or primary stage is unmanifest, changeless and unlimited by time and space, and is an ocean of inconceivable, infinite and self-existent joy. (2) The second stage is that of God as the Ruler of the universe. In this stage the entire universe manifests itself along with God. (3) The third stage is that of individual graded experience of sight, taste, smell, sound and touch. It is this stage which is known by the name of 'Jiva'. Jivas or individual souls are of two kinds: (i) those who experience individual sight etc. as identical with Brahma, and are free from Avidyā or nescience, and (ii) those who, though experiencing individual sight etc., fail to perceive their background, viz., the all-pervading soul, and are therefore bound. (4) The fourth stage is that in which Brahma manifests Itself in the form of the universe. The universe has no existence apart from Brahma. Brahma is both visible and invisible, atomic and all-pervading, with attributes and without attributes, etc., etc. But Its beginningless reality, which is an ocean of perfect nectar-like joy, is ever and everywhere the same.

The Jiva is a particle of Brahma, who stands in the relation of a whole to it. It is Brahma who has taken the form of the universe. Even when It takes the form of the universe and even when the latter gets absorbed into It, Brahma undergoes no transformation whatsoever. The Jiva is atomic in size and has a limited knowledge. Even the liberated soul is atomic. The only difference between a liberated and a bound soul lies in the fact that whereas the former realizes its identity with Brahma and the universe, the latter does not.

*The conception of Mukti.* The Brahma referred to above is none else than Bhagavān Vāsudeva (Śrī Kṛṣṇa); and Mukti is nothing but attaining supreme joy by winning His pleasure and obtaining His vision.

*Practice.* Bhakti alone is the principal means of attaining Liberation. It consists in remembering the names and virtues of God, meditating on His form and adoring Him with His divine consort, Śrī Rādhā.

### PURE MONISM

*Creed.* Brahma is both omnipotent and omniscient and is nothing but Truth, Consciousness and Bliss combined. He is supremely pure and has no admixture of Māyā or any other such thing. He is devoid of attributes and is beyond the modes of Prakṛti. His potency is infinite and inconceivable. He is capable of becoming everything. Hence He reconciles in Himself contrary attributes and contrary statements. Such a Brahma is no other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Goloka (the divine abode of cows). He alone is deserving of service by the Jiva. The latter is a particle of Brahma and is atomic in size. It is also unalloyed. Consciousness is its characteristic quality. The world has evolved by the will of God and by the will of God it disappears. It is by way of sport that He has taken the form of the universe. He alone is the efficient as well as the material cause of the universe. The world is not a product of Māyā, but it is an unchanged evolute of God and identical with Him. Though appearing and disappearing, it is real. It exists as a cause when unmanifest and as an effect when manifest.

*Conception of Mukti.* Mukti is nothing but the attainment of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. A pure Jiva sees the entire universe as identical with Śrī Kṛṣṇa and remains steeped in His love. Even as a wife delights in the service of her husband, so does the Jiva remain immersed in the nectar of supreme joy by serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa as a master.

*Practice.* Bhakti, acquired through the grace of God, is the only means to Liberation. The grace of God is technically known in this system as 'Puṣṭi'; and Bhakti which appears through the grace of God is called

- **Puṣṭi-Bhakti.** This form of Bhakti is altogether distinct from what is known as **Māyāda-Bhakti** or **Formal Bhakti**. Whole-hearted service of God carried on with this Bhakti is the principal means to God-Realization.

### DOCTRINE OF INSCRUTABLE DIVERSITY-CUM-UNITY

*Creed.* Brahma is Nirguṇa, i.e., endowed with immaterial or divine attributes. His potencies are known by the names of Samvit, Sandhīni and Hlādinī. He is independent and omniscient, the bestower of liberation and the same as consciousness. The Jīva is atomic in size and conscious by nature. Its aversion to God is the only cause of its bondage. As soon as it turns its face towards God all its bonds are cut asunder. God, the Jīva, Prakṛti (Matter) and Kāla (Time)—these four entities are eternal and the Jīva, Prakṛti and Kāla are subject to the control of God. The Jīva is a potency of God. The Jīva and Brahma, related to one another as a quality and a qualified substance, are both identical with and distinct from one another. The world has evolved from Brahma; Brahma is its efficient as well as material cause. It is Brahma who by His inconceivable power takes the form of the universe. The world is real, though transitory.

*Conception of Mukti.* Mukti is nothing but attaining nearness to God. The Jīva who has attained the Abode of God never returns to this mortal world. Neither God feels inclined to hurl down a liberated soul from His Abode nor does the liberated soul ever seek to part with God. He eternally enjoys the supreme bliss of serving Him.

*Practice.* Bhakti alone is the principal means to Liberation. Jñāna ( Self-Knowledge ) and Vairāgya ( Dispassion ) are subsidiary to it. God-Realization does not take place without Jñāna, Vairāgya and Bhakti. Bhakti is the essence of the potencies of God known as Hlādinī and Samvit. There are three stages of Bhakti—Sādhana, Bhāva and Prema. Ordinary Bhakti is known as Sādhana-Bhakti. This phase of Bhakti awakens the germ of Divine Love lying imbedded in the heart of a Jīva; hence it is called Sādhana-Bhakti. The special form of Devotion which gives rise to the sun of Divine Love in a heart consisting of pure Sattva or the quality of goodness is termed as 'Bhāva'. Bhāva is an initial stage of Prema or Divine Love. Bhāva intensified goes by the name of 'Prema'. The highest stage of 'Madhura Bhakti' or devotion to God similar to that of a sweetheart to her lover is the essence of this Prema. Prema alone is the *summum bonum* of human existence.

The bulk of the Sanskrit glosses and commentaries on the Gita take their stand on any one of the above six schools and have been written in support of that school. All these six schools have been introduced to the world by exalted souls none of whom can be branded as deluded. All of them are recognized as enlightened souls conversant with the reality of God. Hence the disagreement observed among the glosses and commentaries attributed to them should be explained as a miracle of the divine word and it behoves all of us to bow our heads to them with a guileless heart and to cull from each one of them what is useful to us according to our own spiritual level and taste.



# The Bhagavadgita

## Chapter VII

The eighteen chapters of the Gītā have been divided into three groups of six chapters each, dealing with Karmayoga, Bhaktiyoga and Jñānayoga respectively. This, however, does not mean that the groups exclusively deal with only one type of Yoga, and contain no reference to the other two types. A group is generally named after the type of Yoga which has been primarily dealt with therein. The first chapter of the first of these groups is only of an introductory nature containing no reference to any of the Yogas. Chapter II deals with Sāṅkhyayoga (Jñānayoga) from verses 11 to 30. Thereafter from verse 39 to the end of Chapter III, Karmayoga has been discussed in detail. In Chapters IV and V the topics of Karmayoga and Jñānayoga have been promiscuously dealt with. The main theme of Chapter VI is Dhyānayoga, though Karmayoga and other Yogas too have been discussed here and there according to the needs of the occasion. Thus though all the principal Yogas have been discussed in this first group of six chapters, the subject of Karmayoga has been dealt with more elaborately in this than in the other two groups. Hence this group may be recognized as primarily dealing with Karmayoga.

Division of the Gita  
into three groups  
of six chapters  
each

All the chapters of the intermediate group, viz., Chapters VII to XII, mainly and elaborately deal with Bhaktiyoga, although other subjects too have been incidentally discussed here and there. It is, therefore, quite in the fitness of things to regard this second group as dealing primarily with Bhaktiyoga.

Chapters XIII and XIV, forming part of the last group of six chapters, evidently deal with Jñānayoga. Chapter XV discusses Bhaktiyoga; Chapter XVI contains an exposition of the godly and demoniac properties; Chapter XVII classifies types of faith, food and sacrifice, charity, askesis etc.; while Chapter XVIII, being the concluding chapter of the Gītā, discusses all the three Yogas of Karma, Bhakti and Jñāna, and finally the teaching of the Bhagavadgītā culminates in Bhaktiyoga with an emphasis on surrender to God. Notwithstanding all this, it cannot be gainsaid that the discussion of Jñānayoga in this last group exceeds in volume the discussion of this subject in the first and second groups. Hence this group may be described as primarily dealing with Jñānayoga.

'Jñāna' means consummate knowledge of the formless and attributeless aspect of God with the secret of Its glory and greatness; while 'Vijñāna' means a thorough knowledge of the sports, mysteries, glory and greatness etc. of the qualified aspect of God both with and without form. Knowledge of God which comprises both 'Jñāna' and 'Vijñāna' represents the knowledge of the integral Divinity. The present chapter deals with this integral Divinity as well as with the practices which lead to Its knowledge and the qualified souls possessing such knowledge. It is therefore that the chapter has been named as "The Yoga of Jñāna and Vijñāna."

Title of  
the  
Chapter

Summary of  
the  
Chapter

In the first verse of this chapter the Lord asks Arjuna to hear a discussion of the integral Divinity. In the second He promises to speak of Jñāna and Vijñāna and praises them; whereas verse 3 shows the difficulty of knowing the truth relating to God. In the fourth and the fifth He describes the two Prakṛtis or Natures—the higher as well as the lower, and in the sixth He declares this twofold Prakṛti to be the womb of all beings, and Himself to be the ultimate Cause of the entire creation. In the seventh He declares the whole universe to be His own manifestation, and illustrates the fact of His pervading all as their essence by the analogy of a string of yarn-beads; and the same point is elaborated in verses 8 to 12. Pointing out in the thirteenth why people fail to know God in reality, in the fourteenth He declares His Māyā to be extremely difficult to get over and points out the way to cross it. Showing in verse 15 how sinful men of a deluded intellect fail to worship God, He speaks of the four types of His virtuous devotees in the sixteenth. Declaring the superiority of the enlightened devotee in the seventeenth, in the eighteenth He pronounces all the types of devotees as noble, and the man of wisdom as His own self. The nineteenth shows the rarity of the enlightened devotee. Speaking of the worshippers of other deities in the twentieth, He shows in the twenty-first how He stabilizes their faith in those very deities and indicates the fruit of such worship in the twenty-second. Declaring in the twenty-third the fruit of the worship of other deities to be perishable, He shows how those who adore Him attain the supreme reward in the shape of His own realization. Giving reasons in the twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth why ignorant folk fail to obtain an insight into His virtues, glory and reality, in the twenty-sixth He declares that while He knows all beings, none knows Him. Pointing out the reason of this ignorance in the twenty-seventh, He describes in the twenty-eighth the marks of devotees who worship Him with a firm resolve and exclusive devotion. The chapter is concluded by glorifying the knowledge of His integral being in the twenty-ninth and thirtieth.

*In the last verse of Chapter VI, the Lord declared that in His opinion the Yogi who devoutly and lovingly worshipped Him with his mind focussed on Him was the best of all. But so long as a man does not know the reality, virtues and glory of the Lord it is exceedingly difficult for him to perform such worship unceasingly with the mind; and at the same time it is essential to know the mode of such worship. Therefore, with a view to describing His integral reality, along with His virtues and glory, as well as the practice of devotion with its various processes, the Lord now introduces Chapter VII and asking Arjuna first of all to listen to it carefully, promises to speak of Jñāna and Vijñāna in the next verse.*

Link of  
the  
Discourse

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मय्यासक्तमनाः पार्थ योगं युञ्जन्मदाश्रयः ।

असंशयं समग्रं मां यथा ज्ञास्यसि तच्छृणु ॥ १ ॥

पार्थ O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; मयि आसक्तमनाः with ( your ) mind attached to Me ( through exclusive love ); मदाश्रयः with Me as your sole refuge; योगम् Yoga; युञ्जन् practising; यथा how; समग्रम् in entirety ( with all My splendour, strength and majesty etc. ); माम् Me ( the Self of all ); असंशयम् without any shadow of doubt; ज्ञास्यसि you will know; तत् that; शृणु hear.

Śri Bhagavān said: Arjuna, now listen how with the mind attached to Me ( through exclusive love ) and practising Yoga with absolute dependence on Me, you will know Me ( the Repository of all power, strength and glory and other attributes, the Universal Soul ) in entirety and without any shadow of doubt. ( 1 )

"Mayyāsaktamanāḥ" has been used by the Lord for him whose mind is entirely free from attachment for all forms of enjoyment of this world and the next, and withdrawing itself from all sides has got so deeply attached to God, the sole object of supreme Love and the repository of all virtues, that just as the fish cannot live without water even for an instant he cannot bear even a moment's separation from the Lord nor can he tolerate His slipping out of his memory even for a trice.

Even so he who has totally given up dependence on all objects of the world, and renouncing all forms of worldly hope

and reliance has pinned his faith on God alone, and who knowing the almighty Lord to be his great asylum and supreme goal has thrown his whole responsibility on Him alone and become free from anxiety for ever, is referred to by the Lord as "Madāśrayaḥ".

The subject of discussion in the present chapter is Bhaktiyoga, or the Yoga of Devotion. Therefore, practice of Yoga referred to here means practice of perpetual and constant remembrance of God with faith and devotion, fixing the mind and intellect stably on Him.

God cannot be defined or circumscribed

He permeates the countless millions of universes, and they are all His manifestations. Whatever exists in these universes or beyond them rests in Him. He is eternal, true and ancient; He is the repository of all virtues, omnipotent, omniscient, all-pervading, all-sustaining and all-formed and takes the shape of this world of His own accord through His Yogamāyā. In reality; there is nothing apart from Him; the manifest and the unmanifest, the qualified and the unqualified, everything is He. Knowing His reality thus without the least doubt or misconception is what is meant by knowing Him in entirety and without any shadow of doubt.

ज्ञानं तेऽहं सविज्ञानमिदं वक्ष्याम्यशेषतः ।

यज्ज्ञात्वा नेह भूयोऽन्यज्ज्ञातव्यमवशिष्यते ॥ २ ॥

अहम् I; ते to you; इदम् this; सविज्ञानम् coupled with Vijñāna or Knowledge of the qualified aspect of God both with form and without form; ज्ञानम् knowledge of God in His absolute formless aspect; अशेषतः in its entirety; वक्ष्यामि shall speak of; यत् which; ज्ञात्वा having known; इह here, in this world; भूयः again; अन्यत् anything else; ज्ञातव्यम् to be known; न not; अवशिष्यते remains.

I shall unfold to you in its entirety this wisdom (knowledge of God in His absolute formless aspect) along with the knowledge of the qualified aspect of God (both with form and without form), having known which nothing else remains yet to be known in this world. ( 2 )

Whatever has been taught in this chapter is conducive to the attainment of 'Jñāna' and 'Vijñāna' as explained above. Therefore, just as in Chapter XIII the virtues leading to Jñāna have been termed as 'Jñāna' itself, even so the whole of this chapter should be treated as identical with Jñāna and Vijñāna, inasmuch as it is replete with the teaching of Jñāna and Vijñāna.

'Jñāna' and 'Vijñāna' lead to a proper

realization of the integral being of God. This entire universe is nothing but an insignificant part of that integral being. For him who has known this integral reality of God, naturally there remains nothing to be known. In the concluding verse of Chapter X, the Lord Himself says: "What use your knowing all this multiplicity, Arjuna ? Know only this much that I stand holding this entire universe by a spark of My glory."

*Promising thus to speak of 'Jñāna' and 'Vijñāna', the Lord proceeds in the next verse to demonstrate the rarity of true knowledge of His integral being:—*

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये ।

यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥ ३ ॥

मनुष्याणाम् of men; सहस्रेषु among thousands; कश्चित् hardly one; सिद्धये for perfection (in the shape of God-Realization); यतति strives; यतताम् सिद्धानाम् of

those striving Yogis; अपि again; कश्चित् some rare one; माम् Me; तत्त्वतः in reality; वेत्ति knows.

Hardly one among thousands of men strives to realize Me; of those striving Yogis, again, some rare one (devoting himself exclusively to Me) knows Me in reality. (3)

The use of the word 'men' in this verse indicates, firstly, that birth in the human species is exceedingly difficult to attain. It is obtained through the exceptional grace of God; for everyone belonging to this species is qualified by virtue of one's birth to strive for God-Realization. Differences of nationality, caste, Āśrama (stage in life) or country constitute no bar to one's striving to this end. Secondly, it suggests that freedom of will is denied to all except the human species; hence creatures belonging to the other species cannot strive for God-Realization. As for sub-human creatures such as birds, beasts, insects and reptiles, they possess neither the power nor the capacity to strive to this end. And beings higher than man such as gods etc., even though they possess the power, cannot strive for God-Realization on account of superabundance of enjoyments and lack of qualification in particular. If anyone belonging to the sub-human species or to the ethereal regions ever comes to realize God, it should be attributed to the special grace either of God Himself or of a God-realized saint.

Though blessed with human birth as a fruit of divine grace, the vast majority of men do not even turn their face towards the path of God-Realization due to excessive attachment to enjoyments,

occasioned by the latencies of their past lives, and through want or deficiency of faith in and love for God. Scarce one among thousands, whose latencies of previous births are favourable, and who possesses some amount of faith in and reverence for God, holy men and the scriptures and comes in contact with saints due to the store of one's merits and through the special grace of God, takes to this path and strives for God-Realization.

Again, of those who strive for God-Realization, the Sādhana or practice of all does not attain to the same level owing to differences in the latencies of their past lives, as well as in the intensity of their faith, devotion, association with saints and effort. Obstacles of various kinds also continue to come in their way in the shape of egotism, mineness, desire, attachment and evil association etc. Therefore, there are very few persons whose faith, devotion and Sādhana attain a degree of perfection and who as the result of such perfection are able to realize God in that very life.

The use of the adjective 'Siddhānām' with reference to the striving souls should be understood to indicate that in comparison with sensual men weltering in the morass of worldly enjoyments those who strive for perfection in the shape of God-Realization are as good as 'perfect'.

*Up to this point the Lord promised to speak of 'Jñāna' and 'Vijñāna' and extolled them. Now, while introducing the subject, He first reveals the character of His higher and lower Natures:—*

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।

अहंकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥ ४ ॥



अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम् ।

जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत् ॥ ५ ॥

भूमिः earth; आपः water; अनलः fire; वायुः air; खम् ether; मनः mind; बुद्धिः reason; च and; अहंकारः ego; एव also; इति so; इयम् this ( is ); मे My; अष्टधा विभक्ता eightfold divided; प्रकृतिः Nature; इयम् this one ( of eightfold composition ); तु ( is ) indeed; अपरा ( My ) lower ( nature ); महाबाहो O mighty-armed Arjuna; इतः than this; अन्याम् the other; यया by which; इदम् this ( entire ); जगत् universe; धार्यते is sustained; मे My; जीवभूताम् constituting the life-principle; पराम् higher ( conscious ); प्रकृतिम् nature; विद्धि know.

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, reason and also ego: these constitute My nature eightfold divided. This indeed is My lower ( material ) nature; the other than this, by which the whole universe is sustained, know it to be My higher ( or spiritual ) nature in the form of Jīva ( the life-principle ), O Arjuna.

( 4, 5 )

The earth, water, fire, air and ether referred to in this verse denote the five subtle elements, which are the causes of the five gross elements as well as of the five objects of the senses, viz., sound etc., and which have been called Tanmātras in the Sāṅkhya and Yoga terminology.

Mind, intellect and ego are the three aspects or phases of mind or the internal sense; hence they should be understood to mean the 'cosmic Mind'.

In verse 5 of Chapter XIII, the evolutes of Primordial Matter have been enumerated as 23 in number. But the five objects of senses, viz., 'sound' etc. being the evolutes of the five subtle elements, and the ten organs ( of perception and action ) being the evolutes of the mind, those fifteen are covered by the above eight categories. Therefore, it is just the same to speak of Matter as consisting of eight divisions or twenty-three. The 'Aparā' Prakṛti, being objective and material in nature, is altogether different from and lower than the 'Parā' Prakṛti, or the subjective conscious life-principle. It is this Prakṛti which is the cause of the world and by which the Jīva gets bound.

That is why it is termed as 'Aparā', or lower.

The Jivātmā or individual soul is beyond all distinctions of sex. In order to bring out this fact, the same life-principle or consciousness has been referred to now in the masculine gender as 'Puruṣa' (XV. 16) and 'Kṣetrajña' or 'Knower of the Field' (XIII. 1), and now in the neuter gender as 'Adhyātma' (VII. 26; VIII. 3). It is that very principle which has been spoken of here in the feminine gender as 'Parā Prakṛti' or the Higher Nature.

The whole of this objective world has been referred to in this verse by the term 'Jagat', or universe. The conscious Jivātmā or individual soul sustains this universe. The whole range of objective reality rests on the subject, and all that is knowable is dependent on the knower. The object is not capable of sustaining the subject, nor is the knowable capable of sustaining the Knower. The objective world of matter cannot exist unless it is sustained by the 'Parā Prakṛti' or Higher Nature of the Lord in the form of the conscious individual soul.

*Delineating thus the character of the higher and lower Natures, Parā and Aparā Prakṛtis, of God the Lord now shows that they are the cause of the entire creation, and that He Himself is the Supreme Cause of the universe, which is a combination of the two Prakṛtis.*

एतद्योनीनि भूतानि सर्वाणीत्युपधारय ।

अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा ॥ ६ ॥

सर्वाणि all; भूतानि beings; एतद्योनीनि have evolved from this twofold Prakṛti; अहम् (and) I; कृत्स्नस्य जगतः of the entire creation; प्रभवः (am) the source; तथा as well as; प्रलयः the end; इति this; उपधारय know.

Arjuna, know that all beings have evolved from this twofold Prakṛti, and that I am the source of the entire creation, and into Me again it disappears. ( 6 )

The word 'Bhūtāni' in this context stands for the various orders of living beings in the universe, high and low, animate as well as inanimate. All living beings owe their origin, existence and growth to the combination of these two Prakṛtis. Therefore, these two are the cause of their manifestation. This very fact has been reiterated in verse 26 of Chapter XIII substituting the words 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña' for the 'Aparā' and the 'Parā' Prakṛti respectively.

The word 'Jagat' stands for the entire universe consisting of sentient and insentient creation. Just as the cloud springs from the atmosphere, stays in the

atmosphere and gets dissolved in the atmosphere, or in other words, the atmosphere is its sole cause and support, even so the whole universe springs from God, stays in God and finally disappears into God, or in other words, God is its sole supreme cause and ultimate support. This very point has been elucidated in verses 4, 5 and 6 of Chapter IX as well. It should, however, be remembered in this connection that God is not material or subject to change like the atmosphere. An analogy is only meant to hint at a truth. As a matter of fact, God's manifestation in the form of this universe is nothing but a charming sport of His.

*Thus, when God Himself is the sole cause and ultimate support of the entire creation, it naturally follows that it is a manifestation of God and is pervaded by God. Now, in order to elucidate this very point, the Lord says:—*

मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किञ्चिदस्ति धनंजय ।

मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥ ७ ॥

धनंजय O Arjuna (lit., a conqueror of riches); मत्तः परतरम् besides Me; किञ्चित् anything; अन्यत् else; न not; अस्ति (there) is; इदम् सर्वम् all this (universe); सूत्रे on a thread; मणिगणाः इव as clusters of yarn-beads; मयि on Me; प्रोतम् is threaded.

There is nothing else besides Me, Arjuna. Like clusters of yarn-beads formed by knots on a thread, all this is threaded on Me. ( 7 )

It may be contended here that whereas in the foregoing verse the Lord declared Himself to be the cause and support of this universe, He denies the existence, in this verse, of anything other than Him, which shows the identity of the universe with God. Although these two statements appear as mutually contradictory, there is no real contradiction between them. Just as the vast expanse of ether is the cause and support of the cloud, which again is the same as ether inasmuch as it has no existence apart from its cause, even so God being the cause and support of the universe, the universe is

but a manifestation of God, and nothing else than God. Therefore, both the statements referred to above are correct.

It is customary in India to make a rosary of yarn-beads by forming successive knots on a thread, and treating such knots as so many beads. Now just as yarn and yarn alone is present in the thread as well as in the knots formed thereon, even so the whole of this creation is threaded on God. That is to say, God alone permeates all. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the second half of the verse.

*By the illustration of yarn and yarn-beads, the Lord demonstrated that it is He who has taken all forms and it is He again who pervades all. Now, in order to elucidate this very point, He mentions in the next four verses all those principal entities by which this universe is sustained and declares that it is He who permeates them all as their very essence.*

रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभास्मि शशिसूर्ययोः ।

प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु ॥ ८ ॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; अहम् I ( am ); अप्सु in water; रसः the sapidity; शशिसूर्ययोः of the moon and the sun; प्रभा the light; अस्मि am; सर्ववेदेषु of all the Vedas; प्रणवः ( the sacred syllable ) OM; खे in ether; शब्दः the sound; नृषु ( and ) in men; पौरुषम् the manliness.

Arjuna, I am the sapidity in water and the light of the moon and the sun; I am the sacred syllable OM in all the Vedas, the sound in ether, and the manliness in men.

( 8 )

The principle which constitutes the support of a thing, and pervades it, that principle alone is the life and being of that object, and that alone is declared to be its essence. The Lord accordingly says that He is the essence of water in the form of sapidity. He is the essence

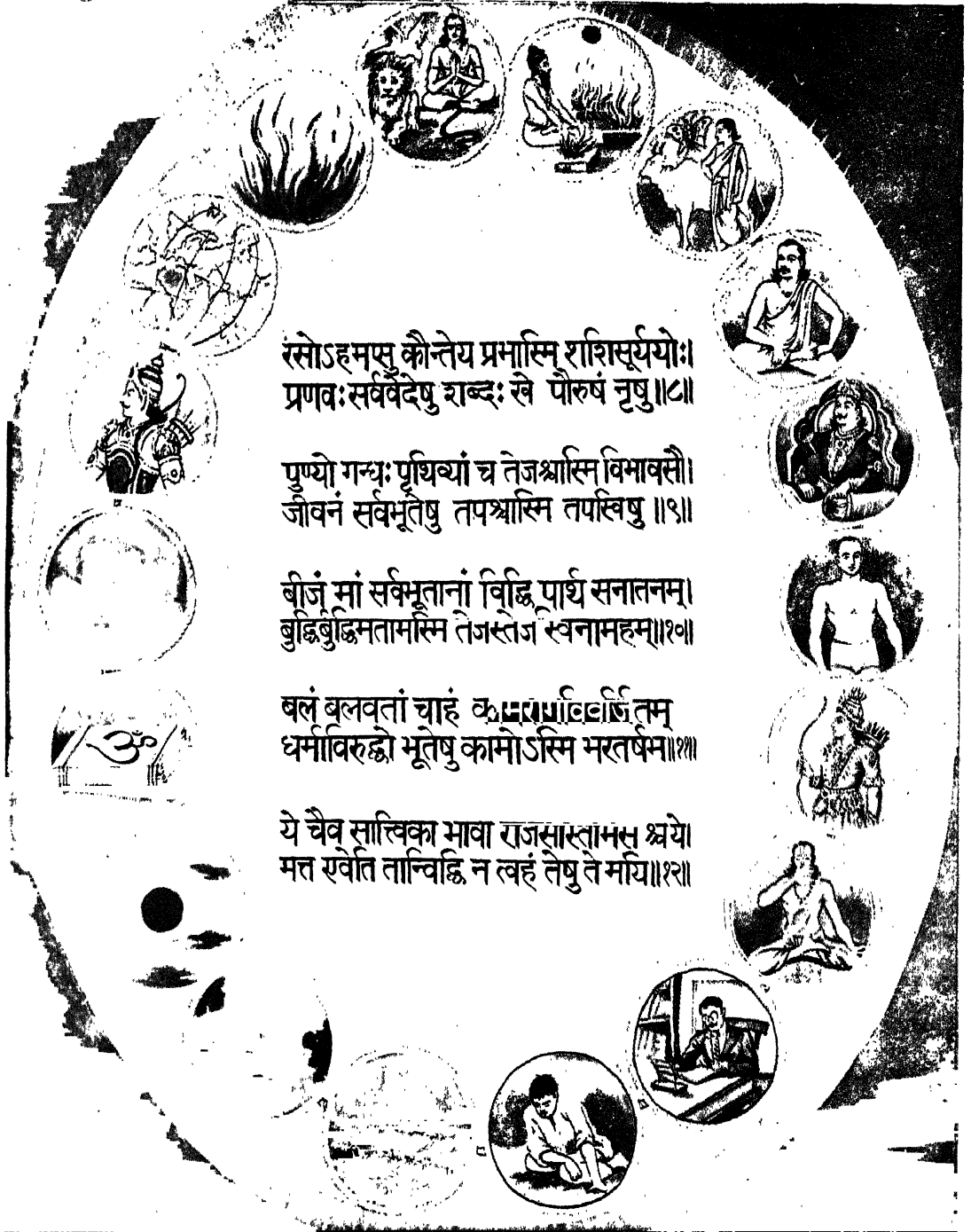
of the moon and the sun in the shape of their light; He is the sacred syllable OM, which is the sum and substance of the Vedas! He is the principle of sound, which constitutes the essence of ether, and again He is the principle of manliness, which constitutes the essence of man.

पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसौ ।

जीवनं सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु ॥ ९ ॥

# Kalyana-Kalpataru

The Lord manifested in All



रसोऽहमसु कौन्तेय प्रभास्मि शशिस्वर्ययोः।  
प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः से पौरुषं नृषु ॥८॥

पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसौ।  
जीवनं सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु ॥९॥

बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थ सनातनम्।  
बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामस्मि तेजस्तो ज स्वनामहम् ॥१०॥

बलं बलवतां चाहं कल्पप्रालिखितम्  
धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ॥११॥

ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामस श्रयो  
मत्त एवात तान्विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि ॥१२॥

“There is nothing else besides Me, Arjuna. Like clusters of yarn-beads formed by knots on a thread, all this is threaded on Me.”

पृथिव्याम् in the earth; पुण्यः गन्धः (I am) pure odour; च and; विभावसौ in fire; तेजः (pure) brilliance; अस्मि (I) am; च and; सर्वभूतेषु in all beings; जीवनम् (their) life; च and; तपस्विषु in men of ascesis; तपः austerity; अस्मि am.

I am the pure odour (the subtle principle of odour) in the earth and the brilliance in fire: nay, I am the life in all beings and the austerity in men of ascesis. (9)

Following the line of thought in the preceding verse, the Lord shows in this verse that it is He who pervades and sustains the earth, fire, the living beings as well as the men of austere penance as their very existence in the form of odour, brilliance, the life-principle and ascesis respectively.

The use of the adjective 'Punyaḥ' with the word 'Gandhah' is intended to show that 'odour' here does not mean the object of the olfactory sense, but the

subtle principle of odour (Gandha-Tanmātra), which is the origin of the earth. Even so sapidity and sound too should be understood to refer to the corresponding Tanmātras which constitute the causes of the elements of water and ether respectively and not to the objects of the senses of taste and hearing. The word 'Sarvabhūteṣu' stands for all living beings, both animate and inanimate, and 'life' stands for the principle of vitality, which sustains all living beings and distinguishes them from lifeless objects.

बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थ सनातनम् ।

बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामसि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ॥ १० ॥

पार्थ O son of Prithā, Arjuna; सर्वभूतानाम् of all beings; सनातनम् बीजम् the eternal seed; माम् Me (alone); विद्धि know; अहम् I; बुद्धिमताम् of the intelligent; बुद्धिः the intelligence; तेजस्विनाम् (and) of the glorious; तेजः the glory; अस्मि am.

Arjuna, know Me the eternal seed of all beings. I am the intelligence of the intelligent; the glory of the glorious am I. (10)

The word 'Sanātana' means that which has existed for ever and will never perish. God alone is the ultimate substratum of the whole creation, both animate and inanimate, and everything originates from Him. It is, therefore, quite in the fitness of things that He should declare Himself to be the 'eternal seed' of the entire creation. In IX. 18 the Lord calls Himself the 'imperishable seed', and again in X. 39 He refers to Himself as "the seed of all beings". An ordinary material seed is neither without beginning nor imperishable. God

alone is such a seed. Hence the Lord calls Himself the 'eternal seed'.

The pure cognitive faculty which ascertains all objects and which controls and regulates the mind and senses is called Buddhi (the intellect). He whose cognitive faculty is highly developed is referred to as a man of intelligence. This cognitive faculty being a part of the 'Aparā Prakṛti' or lower Nature of God, the Lord says that He is the reasoning faculty which is the essential feature of the intelligent. Even so Tejas, or glory,

stands for the power of influencing others. also being a part of the 'Apara Prakṛti'. A person possessing this power in of God, the Lord speaks of both these abundance is called 'glorious'. This power powers as the same as Himself.

बलं बलवतां चाहं कामरागविवर्जितम् ।

धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ॥ ११ ॥

भरतर्षभ O best among the Bharatas; अहम् I ( am ); बलवताम् of the mighty; कामरागविवर्जितम् free from passion and desire; बलम् the might; च and; भूतेषु in beings; धर्माविरुद्धः not conflicting with virtue or scriptural injunctions; कामः ( sexual ) desire; अस्मि ( I ) am.

Arjuna, of the mighty I am the might, free from passion and desire; in beings I am the sexual desire not conflicting with virtue or scriptural injunctions. ( 11 )

The might which is accompanied with desire, passion, egoism and anger etc. is the demoniacal type of might referred to in XVI. 18 and the renunciation of which has been stressed in XVIII. 53. Even so sexual desire which runs counter to virtue, being a principal element of the demoniacal nature, is the root of all evils ( III. 37 ), a gate to hell and worth giving up ( XVI. 21 ). The might and desire which are of a different type from those referred to above, i.e., irreproachable might and

a pure desire alone are worth possessing.

By addressing Arjuna as the best among the Bharatas, the Lord indicated that Arjuna, being descended from Bharata, possessed neither the demoniac type of might, nor the foul and impious type of desire. He was possessed of a might which was free from desire and passion and of a sexual desire which was in consonance with righteousness. The Lord speaks of such might and such desire as His own manifestation.

*Thus declaring Himself to be present in all important things as their very essence the Lord indirectly proved that He was all-pervasive and all-formed. He now winds up the topic by calling Himself the root cause of the entire creation, which is an evolute of the three modes of Prakṛti:—*

ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामसाश्च ये ।

मत्त एवेति तान् विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि ॥ १२ ॥

च and; ये एव whichever; सात्त्विकाः born of Sattva ( the quality of goodness ); भावाः entities ( there are ); च and; ये ( those ) that; राजसाः born of Rajas ( the principle of activity ); तामसाः ( and ) born of Tamas ( the principle of inertia ); तान् them ( all ); मत्तः from Me; एव alone; इति thus; विद्धि know; तु but ( in reality ); तेषु in them; अहम् I; ते ( and ) they; मयि in Me; न ( are ) not.

Whatever other entities there are, born of Sattva ( the quality of goodness ), and those that are born of Rajas ( the principle of activity ) and Tamas ( the principle of inertia ), know them all as evolved from Me alone. In reality, however, neither do I exist in them, nor they in Me. ( 12 )

Mind, intellect, ego, the senses, the objects of senses, the Tanmātras (subtle states of the five elements), the five elements, all good and evil qualities and actions, and whatever other entities there are, they are all included in entities born of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. All these entities evolve and develop from the 'Aparā Prakṛti' or lower nature of God. And to know that this Prakṛti belongs to God, who alone is her ultimate substratum, and that it is under His sportive direction that she carries on her functions of creating, multiplying and dissolving everything, is what is meant by knowing them as evolved from God.

To take a familiar illustration, though the atmosphere is the support of the cloud appearing therein, it remains absolutely uncontaminated by the cloud. The cloud is not always present in the atmosphere; and being fleeting by nature it has, as a matter of fact, no abiding reality either.

But the atmosphere exists even when there is no cloud; even where there is no cloud, the atmosphere is there nonetheless; its existence is not dependent on the existence of the cloud. In reality, the cloud itself is not something different from the atmosphere; it appears as arising in and from the atmosphere. Accordingly, inasmuch as the cloud has no separate existence as a matter of fact, the atmosphere is at no time in the cloud, and ever exists in its own being. Even so, though God is the cause and substratum of all the evolutes of the three modes of Prakṛti, in reality they do not exist in them, nor He in them. He is always and in every state beyond the Guṇas or modes of Nature, and He ever exists in His own Being. That is why He says, "Neither do I exist in them, nor they in Me." For further elucidation of this point the reader is referred to verses 4 and 5 of Chapter IX.

*The Lord has thus far shown that the whole world is His own manifestation and is pervaded by Him. Here, then, the question arises: Why do people fail to recognize God though He is thus present everywhere and is so near them? In reply to this, the Lord says:—*

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत् ।  
मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम् ॥ १३ ॥

गुणमयैः evolved from the three modes of Nature; त्रिभिः three kinds of; एभिः these; भावैः by entities; इदम् this; सर्वम् entire; जगत् creation; मोहितम् ( is ) deluded; एभ्यः from these; परम् ( standing ) apart; माम् Me; अव्ययम् the imperishable Being; न not; अभिजानाति recognizes.

The whole of this creation is deluded by these objects evolved from the three modes of Prakṛti—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas; that is why the world fails to recognize Me, standing apart from these and imperishable. ( 13 )

The objects by which the world is herein said to be deluded are the same as described in the preceding verse. The adjectives 'Tribhiḥ' and 'Guṇamayaiḥ' are intended to show that all the entities referred to here are of three kinds according as they are evolved from the three Guṇas. And the word 'Jagat' refers to all animate creatures; for the question of delusion hardly arises in the case of inanimate objects. Therefore, the statement of the Lord in this verse seems to indicate that all embodied creatures of the world, human beings not excepted, are, guided by their respective temperament, disposition and bent of mind and come to regard these objects, which are evolved from the three modes of Prakṛti and are transitory and full of sorrow, as eternal and a source of joy, and deluded by the glamour of their supposed charm and blissful nature forget the supreme object of life. That is why they turn their face away from the thought and knowledge of the virtues, glory, truth, identity and mysteries of God and falling a prey to doubt and misconception show irreverence

to God. Completely taken up as they are with the evolutes of the three Guṇas their faculty of judgment has got so blunted that they fail to recognize any duty or goal of life other than the accumulation of objects and their enjoyment.

The reasoning faculty of these men deluded by worldly enjoyments does not reach beyond the perishable realm of the three Guṇas; hence they fail to recognize God, who is wholly above these and imperishable.

In XV.18 as well the Lord declares Himself as altogether beyond what He calls 'Kṣara' or perishable Matter. The same principle which is named as 'Kṣara' in that context has been termed here as 'Aparā Prakṛti' and 'objects evolved from the three Guṇas'. That which has been spoken of there as 'Akṣara Puruṣa', has been referred to as 'Parā Prakṛti' in this chapter; and what has been termed as 'Puruṣottama' there has been referred to as 'Mām' in the present context.

*The Lord declared the world as deluded by the evolutes of the three Guṇas. This led Arjuna to enquire whether there existed any means of getting rid of this delusion. The All-merciful Lord, who is the inner Witness of all hearts, understood this. He, therefore, now indicates the means of getting over His Māyā pronouncing it as difficult to cross:—*

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।

मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥ १४ ॥

हि because; एषा this; दैवी most wonderful; गुणमयी consisting of the three Guṇas; मम My; माया veil; दुरत्यया (is) difficult to break through; ये who; माम् Me; एव alone; प्रपद्यन्ते constantly adore; ते they; एताम् this; मायाम् veil; तरन्ति (are able to) cross.

For this most wonderful Māyā (veil) of Mine, consisting of the three Guṇas (modes of Nature), is extremely difficult to break through; those, however, who constantly adore Me alone are able to cross it. ( 14 )

The word 'Eṣā', which is a demonstrative adjective, refers to something directly perceptible by the senses; and Prakṛti is perceptible only through her



evolutes. This should be taken to mean that the same Prakṛti, which was referred to in the preceding verse in the form of her evolutes under the name of 'Guṇamayaiḥ Bhāvaiḥ' (evolutes of the three Guṇas), has been mentioned here under the name of 'Māyā'. The Guṇas as well as their evolutes in the shape of this material and phenomenal world exist only in this Māyā: that is why it has been spoken of as consisting of the three Guṇas. This Māyā is not of an ordinary type like that employed by conjurers and demons; it is God's own most wonderful power. That is why it has been called *Daivī* (unearthly). And, finally, by calling it 'Mine' and extremely difficult to break through, the Lord indicates that He being the Lord of this Māyā, man cannot easily get over it without taking refuge in Him.

He who looks upon God alone as his supreme refuge, supreme resort, dearest object of love and supreme goal, and regarding everything as belonging to Him, or existing only for His purpose, has

renounced the sense of possession and attachment in respect of his body, wife, progeny, wealth, home and fame etc.; nay, who uses them all only as the means of worshipping the Lord and remains ever satisfied with whatever is ordained for him by God, nay, who is ever alert in carrying out the behest of God, and remaining constantly engaged in the remembrance of God keeps himself ever united with Him in every way, is regarded as constantly adoring God. This is what is known as exclusive surrender to God. It is only such devotees that are able to cross Māyā.

It is the 'Aparā Prakṛti' with its evolutes that is referred to here as 'Māyā'. He who having surrendered Himself to God, who is the Lord of Māyā, and thoroughly grasped through His grace the secret of this Māyā has been completely dissociated from it and has realized God, who is beyond Māyā, is said to have crossed the Māyā.

*Showing thus the difficulty of getting over Māyā, the Lord declared His adoration as the means of crossing it. The question now arises: If such is the case, how is it that people do not constantly worship God? In reply to this, the Lord says:—*

न मां दुष्कृतिनो मूढाः प्रपद्यन्ते नराधमाः ।

माययापहतज्ञाना आसुरं भावमाश्रिताः ॥ १५ ॥

मायया अपहतज्ञानाः those whose wisdom has been carried away by Māyā; आसुरम् demoniac; भावम् nature; आश्रिताः having embraced; नराधमाः vile among men; दुष्कृतिनः of evil deeds; मूढाः fools; माम् Me; न not प्रपद्यन्ते adore.

Those whose wisdom has been carried away by Māyā, and who have embraced the demoniac nature, such foolish and vile men evil deeds do not adore Me.

( 15 )

The word 'Duṣkṛtinaḥ' here refers to those who have committed sins in their past lives and are deliberately engaged in committing sins in the current life too. Again, those who, far from knowing what is Prakṛti (Matter), what is Puruṣa

or Spirit, what is God, and in what relation does the individual soul stand to God and *vice versa*, do not even know, nor care to know, that the object of human existence is to attain God and that man's primary duty is to adore Him, are

referred to here as 'Mūḍhāḥ'. Even so there are men who are vile in thought and deed—who through excess of attachment for enjoyment, thoughtlessness and lethargy are wont to dissipate their lives in enjoying the pleasures of the senses alone and are constantly engaged in the performance of low and reprehensible acts for obtaining such enjoyments. The word 'Narādhamaḥ' refers to this type of men. The expression 'Māyāpahṛtajūnāḥ' denotes those whose judgment has been warped through height of perversity and

irreverence and who, therefore, refusing to recognize the Vedas and other scriptures and noble teachings handed down by tradition from preceptor to disciple, and having no belief in God, the law of recompense and rebirth, remain entangled in the cobweb of fallacious and captious reasoning and unbelief and harm others. Men of a demoniac disposition who besides possessing the above attributes have embraced such demoniac propensities as hypocrisy, arrogance, pride, harshness, lust, anger, greed, infatuation etc. never adore God.

*The preceding verse stated that sinful men possessed of the demoniac nature do not worship God. The question, therefore, arises: What type of men worship Him, then? In reply to this, the Lord says:—*

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।

आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥ १६ ॥

भरतर्षभ O best among the Bharatas; अर्जुन O Arjuna; सुकृतिनः of noble deeds; अर्थार्थी the seeker after worldly possessions; आर्तः the afflicted; जिज्ञासुः the seeker for knowledge; च and; ज्ञानी the man of wisdom; चतुर्विधाः जनाः (these) four types of devotees; माम् Me; भजन्ते worship.

Four types of devotees of noble deeds worship Me, Arjuna,—the seeker after worldly possessions, the afflicted, the seeker for knowledge, and the man of wisdom, O best of Bharatas. ( 16 )

The word 'Sukṛtinah' in this verse refers to those who have by performing virtuous acts through successive lives reformed their nature and got habituated to noble deeds, and who under the impulse of past tendencies or through the influence of holy association perform only noble deeds as enjoined by the Lord in the current life too. Virtuous acts lead to a knowledge of the glory and greatness of God and promote faith in Him; and faith is conducive to the practice of Bhajana (adoration of God). This shows that the adjective 'Sukṛtinah' qualifies all the four types of devotees referred to in the verse. In other words, all devotees who adore God with faith are invariably

'virtuous', whatever the motive of their worship.

A devotee of the 'Arthārthi' type is he who cherishes in his heart the craving for one or more enjoyments of this world or the next, such as the possession of a wife, progeny, wealth, honour, eminence, fame and heavenly bliss etc., but who depends on God and God alone for the satisfaction of his desire, and practises adoration with reverence and faith for such satisfaction.

Devotees like Sugriva and Vibhīṣaṇa are recognized as belonging to this class, and the name of Dhruva is cited as the foremost among them. Uttānapāda, the

elder son of Swāyambhuva Manu, had two consorts, Suniti and Suruchi by name. Suniti gave birth to Dhruva, and Suruchi to Uttama. The king was particularly fond of his second wife, Suruchi. One day, while child Dhruva sought the lap of his father, he was snubbed by Suruchi, who tore him away saying, "You are an unlucky chap, having taken birth from the womb of Suniti. Had you been intended for sharing the royal throne, you would have been born of me. Therefore, go and take to the worship of Śrī Hari; then alone will you gain the object of your desire." The insulting behaviour of the stepmother cut the boy to the quick; with tears in his eyes, he ran to his mother Suniti and related the whole incident to her. Suniti said, "Dear child! The remarks of mother Suruchi are quite true. Without adoring God, you will not attain the object of your desire." Hearing the words of his mother, the boy immediately left his home in order to practise adoration with the motive of gaining the kingdom. The sage Nārada met the boy on the way and tried to persuade him to return. He even told the boy that he would get the kingdom for him; but the boy did not swerve from his resolve. The sage then imparted to the boy the sacred formula 'OM Namō Bhagavate Vāsudevāya' (obeisance to Bhagavān Śrī Viṣṇu), taught him how to meditate on the four-armed figure of the Lord, and blessed him. Retiring to the forest of Madhuvana stretching along the bank of the Jamuna, the boy started his austerities. Horrors and temptations of various kinds came up before him to deter him from his purpose; but nothing could shake his resolution. At last, pleased with his devotion, the Lord revealed Himself before the boy. Receiving the news from Devarṣi Nārada King Uttānapāda, accompanied by his younger son Uttama and the two queens, proceeded to the forest to bring his boy back. They met Dhruva on the way. He looked the very embodiment of austerity. Alighting from his

elephant, the king picked up the child and hugged him to his bosom. He brought him back to his capital with great pomp and festivity. At last, handing over the kingdom to Dhruva, the king adopted the life of austere penance (Vānaprastha) and repaired to the forest.

A devotee of the 'Ārta' type is he who practises worship of God with absolute faith and unflinching devotion for the alleviation of physical or mental agony, or with a view to securing relief from adversity, fear of enemies, ailment, ignominy, or the fear of being attacked by thieves, dacoits, desperadoes or beasts of prey, getting unnerved by such fear.

The famous elephant of the Puranic legend, the captive kings in the court of Jarāsandha and many others belong to this class of devotees; but the name of Draupadī, the devoted and faithful consort of the Pāṇḍavas, is cited as the foremost devotee of this class.

Daughter of King Drupada, Draupadī rose from the sacrificial altar. Having a beautiful swarthy complexion, she was also called by the name of Kṛṣṇā. Draupadī had infinite virtues; she was an extremely devoted and faithful wife, an ideal housewife, and a true devotee of God. She knew Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the fullest manifestation of Divinity,—as God Himself, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss; and the Lord too for His part never concealed from her even His most secret pastimes. She was even aware of the transcendent sports connected with the pure Divine Love that manifested itself in the cowherd damsels of Brindaban, and which were not known even to the husbands and children of the blessed Gopis. It was therefore that while being stripped of her garment by the Kauravas she addressed Him as the 'Beloved of the Gopis'.

Under instructions from Duryodhana, wicked Duḥśāsana dragged her to the Kaurava Court and began to strip her of

her loin-cloth, which was the only garment on her person, and finding no indication of succour from any quarter and feeling altogether helpless Draupadī thought of the divine Śrī Kṛṣṇa, her supreme supporter and greatest friend. She had the firm conviction in her heart that the Lord would surely appear as soon as she remembered Him; for it would be impossible for Him to resist her plaintive cries. She addressed the following appeal to the Lord:—

“O Govinda, the Protector of cows ! O Resident of Dwārakā ! O Kṛṣṇa, Beloved of the Gopīs ! O Keśava ! Is it unknown to You that I am being humiliated by the Kauravas ? O Master ! O Lord of Lakṣmī, goddess of prosperity, O King of Vraja ! O Allayer of suffering ! O Janārdana, save me from floundering in the ocean of the Kauravas' tyranny ! O Kṛṣṇa ! O Attractor of souls ! O great Yogi ! O Universal Soul ! O Creator of the universe ! O Govinda ! Protect this languishing suppliant creature fallen into the clutches of the Kauravas !”\*

This plaintive appeal from Draupadī melted the heart of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the universe. Overwhelmed with compassion and leaving the bed on which He lay at Dwārakā, the All-merciful Lord ran to save her.†

The Lord appeared in the guise of cloth in that devilish court of the Kauravas ! Saris of various colours and designs began to emerge one after another from the one which Draupadī had on her person as Duḥśāsana snatched at them in his attempt to denude her. Heaps of Saris were piled up in the royal court ! Draupadī's dearest friend came to her rescue in the very nick of time and

saved her honour ! Duḥśāsana sank to the ground exhausted.

A devotee of the ‘Jijñāsu’ type is he who practises devotion to the Lord with the sole motive of knowing God in reality (XIV. 26), caring not for wealth, woman, progeny, house and other objects and unmindful of disease and danger.

Among devotees of this class, the names of Parīkṣit and many others are mentioned; but the name of Uddhava is the best known of them all. Chapters VII to XXX of Book XI of *Srimad Bhāgavata* embody the divine teachings of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava, which are popularly known by the name of *Uddhava-gītā*.

A devotee of the ‘Jñāni’ type is he who has realized God, in whose eyes God alone remains as the abiding reality,—there is nothing else than God,—and whose desires have altogether ceased as a result of that realization, and who therefore worships God under the natural impulse of his heart.

Śrī Śukadeva, Sanaka and his three brothers, Devarṣi Nārada, Bhīṣma and others are well-known figures belonging to this category. Prahlāda too was recognized as a devotee of this type even in his boyhood. He received spiritual instruction from Devarṣi Nārada, while he was yet in the womb of his mother. He was sprung from the loins of the demon king Hiranyakaśipu. Hiranyakaśipu hated Śrī Hari, while Prahlāda was a great devotee of the Lord. Therefore, Hiranyakaśipu subjected him to hard persecution. He caused him to be bitten by poisonous snakes, trampled under the feet of elephants, hurled from palace-tops, thrown into the sea and offered to fire. His

\* गोविन्द द्वारकावासिन् कृष्ण गोपीजनप्रिय । कौरवैः परिभूतां मां किं न जानासि केशव ॥  
हे नाथ हे रमानाथ व्रजनाथार्तिनाशन । कौरवार्णवमग्नं मामुद्धरस्व जनार्दन ॥

कृष्ण कृष्ण महायोगिन् विश्वात्मन् विश्वभावन । प्रपन्नां पाहि गोविन्द कुरुमध्येऽवसीदतीम् ॥

† त्यक्तवा शय्यासनं पङ्क्त्यां कृपालुः कृपयाभ्यगात् ।

( *Mahābhārata, Sabhāparva* 67 )

teachers also tried to dispose of him. But on every such occasion the Lord came to his rescue. For his sake the Lord manifested Himself in the form of a man-lion and put an end to the bloody career of Hiranyakaśipu. Apart from fearlessness, which was a sure sign of Prahlaḍa's enlightenment, the sublime teaching that he imparted to his fellow-students while receiving his schooling at the preceptor's house during his very childhood also proves his state of enlightenment. For the beautiful story of his life the reader is referred to the *Bhāgavata* and the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*.

The use of the indeclinable 'Cha' at the end of the verse is intended to distinguish the Jñānī from the other types of devotees and also to bring out his superiority over the rest. The glory of the Jñānī Bhakta discussed in verses 17, 18 and 19 below has been adumbrated by the use of this indeclinable.

Devotees who worship God in any form or shape with unflinching faith are all noble souls. It is therefore that the Lord refers to all the four types of devotees as 'virtuous' in this and 'noble' in the eighteenth verse. But if we assess the relative value of each type according to the spirit of this verse, it will appear that the 'Ārta' type of devotees is superior to the 'Arthārthī', and 'Jijñāsu' to the 'Ārta', the Jñānī being superior even to the 'Jijñāsu'. For the 'Arthārthī' worships

God for the sake of worldly enjoyments, taking them to be the source of happiness. He is not fully conversant with the glory of God; that is why he does not develop full love for God, and that is why he craves for enjoyments. A devotee of the 'Ārta' type asks nothing from God for the sake of enjoyment. Although this proves that he loves God more than the 'Arthārthī', his love is certainly shared to some extent by bodily comforts, honour, fame, etc. It is therefore that when faced with a grave danger or ignominy he cries out to God for protection against the same. A devotee of the 'Jijñāsu' type neither seeks pleasure or enjoyment nor loses his nerve in the face of worldly danger. His only interest lies in knowing the truth about God. This shows that although he has no attachment for worldly enjoyments, the craving for liberation nevertheless lingers in him. Therefore, his love, though distinct from and higher than that of the 'Arthārthī' and the 'Ārta' types of devotees, is yet deficient as compared to the love of the 'Jñānī'. The 'Jñānī', however, who knows the truth of the integral Divinity, constantly and lovingly adores God as a matter of course, without any other motive or interest. Therefore, he is the best of all.

Addressing Arjuna as the best among the Bharatas the Lord seeks to indicate that he was a 'virtuous' man, and was therefore already engaged in the practice of adoration.

*Referring thus to the four types of devotees, the Lord now proceeds to praise the Divine Love possessed by the 'Jñānī', and establishes his superiority over the other types of devotees.*

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।

प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥ १७ ॥

तेषाम् of these; नित्ययुक्तः ever established in identity with Me; एकभक्तिः possessed of exclusive devotion; ज्ञानी the man of wisdom; विशिष्यते excels; हि for; ज्ञानिनः to the enlightened devotee (who knows Me in reality); अहम्

I (am); अत्यन्तं extremely; प्रियः dear; च and; सः he ( the enlightened devotee );  
मम to Me; प्रियः ( is ) extremely dear.

Of these the best is the man of wisdom, ever established in identity with Me and possessed of exclusive devotion. For I am extremely dear to the wise man ( who knows Me in reality ), and he is extremely dear to Me. ( 17 )

The word 'Nityayuktah' refers to him who is ever and constantly established in God alone, having lost all consciousness of the world, of his own body, nay, of his very 'self'; and the word 'Ekabhaktiḥ' stands for him who cherishes motiveless and concentrated love for God alone. The man of wisdom, who knows the truth about God, has both these virtues fully developed in him; it is therefore that the two adjectives have been used with reference to him.

A devotee who has fully realized the truth and mysteries of God, who sees everything as God, and beholds Him everywhere and at every time, nay, in whose eyes nothing remains apart from God, and whose mind and intellect, having realized God as the sole and supreme Reality and the most beloved of all, are altogether freed from all attachments and desires, and are merged wholly in God,—who can measure the depth of love such a devotee cherishes for the Lord. He who has renounced for the sake of God all craving for the pleasures and enjoyments of this world and the next,

which are so dear and agreeable and extremely rare in the eyes of worldly-minded men,—others cannot even imagine how dearly such a devotee loves the Lord and in what great esteem he holds Him. That is why the Lord says in this verse, "Extremely dear am I to the man of wisdom." And it goes without saying that he who holds God so dear should be extremely dear to God. For, in the first place, God Himself is an embodiment of Love by His very nature.\* Nay, it is from a drop of that boundless ocean of nectarine love that the entire creation derives its joy. Secondly, it has been proclaimed by the Lord: "Howsoever men approach Me, even so do I seek them." What wonder, then, that God should bestow His utmost love on such a devotee ? It is therefore that He says: "Such a devotee is extremely dear to Me."

Showing the height and depth of love possessed by the God-realized devotee, who has full knowledge of the virtues, glory and reality of God, the present verse praises him as the best of all devotees.

*The Lord declared the enlightened devotee as the best of all, and extremely dear to Him. One may ask here: Does this mean that the other types of devotees are not so good and dear to Him ? In reply to this, the Lord says:—*

उदाराः सर्व एवैते ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम् ।

आस्थितः स हियुक्तात्मा मामेवानुत्तमां गतिम् ॥ १८ ॥

\* रसो वै सः । रसं शब्दाद्यं लब्ध्वाऽऽनन्दी भवति ॥ ( Taittirīya Upaniṣad II. 7 )

"God is Love absolute; it is from this Love that the soul derives its joy."

एते these; सर्वे all; एव verily; उदाराः (are) noble, ~~and~~ the man of wisdom; तु however; मे My; आत्मा self; एव indeed; मतम् (such is My) belief; हि for; युक्तात्मा having his mind and intellect merged in Me; सः he (the enlightened devotee); अनुत्तमम् the highest; गतिम् goal; माम् (in) Me; एव alone; अस्थितः (is) firmly established.

Indeed all these are noble, but the man of wisdom is My very self: such is My view. For such a devotee, who has his mind and intellect merged in Me, is firmly established in Me alone, the highest goal. (18)

Among the four types of devotees referred to in this context, the man of wisdom being unquestionably the best, the other three, viz., the 'Ārthārthi', the 'Ārta' and the 'Jijñāsu' too, are devoted to the worship of God and possess firm and supreme faith in Him. They have definitely come to the conclusion that God is almighty, omniscient, the universal Lord, supremely compassionate and the greatest friend, and that their hopes and aspirations can be realized through Him and Him alone. Armed with this conviction and knowledge, they give up dependence on everything else and devote their life to practices such as the worship and remembrance, adoration and service of the Lord. They scrupulously refrain from doing anything which may weaken their faith in God even to the slightest degree. Their desires have not altogether ceased; but they seek their fulfilment from God and God alone. It is not unnatural for a devoted and faithful wife to want something for herself; but she would seek it from her beloved husband alone. She would not even cast a glance at another, much less rely on another, nor does she know anyone else. Even so the devotees

referred to above depend on God and God alone. That is why the Lord calls them all as noble. It is therefore that He says in verse 23: "My devotees, howsoever they worship Me, in the end come to Me alone." Such is the fruit of devotion to God proclaimed in IX. 25 as well.

The indeclinable 'Tu' is intended to differentiate the 'Jñāni' from the other types of devotees mentioned above. It shows that even though all of them are good and dear to the Lord, the man of wisdom excels them all.

By calling the Jñāni His own self, the Lord shows that there is no difference whatsoever between the man of wisdom and Himself. Such a devotee is the same as God, and God is the same as the devotee; there is absolute identity between the two.

Such a devotee ever remains constantly and unshakably fixed in God, regarding Him alone as the supreme and ultimate goal and the supreme refuge. This is what is meant by his being "firmly established in God, the highest goal."

*Now, in order to show the rarity of such an enlightened devotee, the Lord says:—*

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते ।

वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥ १९ ॥

बहूनाम् जन्मनाम् of a series of births; अन्ते in the very last; ज्ञानवान् the enlightened soul; सर्वम् all (this); वासुदेवः (is) God; इति thus; माम् Me; प्रपद्यते worships; सः that; महात्मा exalted soul; सुदुर्लभः (is) very rare.

In the very last of all births the enlightened soul worships Me, realizing that all this is God. Such a great soul is very rare. (19)

The very birth in which a man attains the rank of an enlightened devotee is the last of his many births. For having realized God in this way one is never born again. That constitutes his last birth.

One is apt to interpret the first half of this verse to mean that man attains the rank of an enlightened devotee only after practising devotion with an interested motive for successive births. Such an interpretation, however, would make it inevitable for devotees of the 'Arthārthi', 'Ārta' and 'Jijñāsu' types to go through many rounds of births. But such a view is negatived by a number of statements of the Lord in which He says that all types of His devotees attain Him (VII. 23; IX. 25); and nowhere in that connection does He lay it down as compulsory for them to go through a number of births. Of course, in the event of his practice being slack through deficiency of faith and love a devotee may have to go through many births; but if his faith and love are highly developed and his practice is intense, he can realize God in one single birth. Time is no determining factor here.

The word 'Jñāna' forming part of 'Jñānavān' refers to the same wisdom the attainment of which along with that of 'Vijñāna' has been praised in verse 2 of this chapter; and the word 'Jñānavān' refers to the loving devotee who has attained that knowledge, viz., the knowledge of Brahma without attributes, together with Vijñāna or the knowledge

of qualified Brahma with and without form, and of whom verse 3 says: "Some rare one knows Me in reality." It is for this reason that in verse 18 the Lord speaks of him as His very self.

The whole creation is a manifestation of God, and there is nothing apart from God: to perceive this truth directly once for all, and to remain ever established in it is to worship Him realizing that "All this is God."

People in the world do not in the first place conceive a liking for the practice of adoration. If a rare one among thousands takes a fancy to it, his nature compels him to relax his efforts and therefore to give up the practice altogether. Even if a man puts forth a special effort, through deficiency of faith and devotion he continues to divert it towards the satisfaction of his desires, with the result that he too fails to realize God. This proves that God-realized souls are very rare in this world. Hence it is but reasonable to assume that exalted souls of the type referred to above are very difficult to get in this world.

If anyone comes in contact with such a noble soul, he should be regarded as exceptionally fortunate. Devarṣi Nārada says in his 'Aphorisms on Bhakti':—

महत्सङ्गस्तु दुर्लभोऽगम्योऽमोघश्च ॥ २९ ॥

"Association with great souls is not only rare but hard to obtain, though unailing in its effect."

*In verse 15 it was stated that men of a demoniac disposition who are given to evil deeds do not worship God; while in verses 16 to 19 we were told that virtuous men worship God. The Lord now proceeds to speak of those who, though performing noble deeds, are yet swayed by desire and worship other gods according to the prompting of their own nature.*



कामैस्तैस्तैर्हृतज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्तेऽन्यदेवताः ।

तं तं नियममास्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ॥ २० ॥

तैः तैः कामैः by various desires; हृतज्ञानाः having their wisdom carried away; स्वया प्रकृत्या by their own nature; नियताः prompted; तम् तम् नियमम् vows relating to each deity; आस्थाय undertaking; अन्यदेवताः other deities; प्रपद्यन्ते worship.

Those whose wisdom has been carried away by various desires, being prompted by their own nature, worship other deities adopting rules relating to each. ( 20 )

The repetition of the word 'Taiḥ' in this verse shows that the desires of all persons are not of a uniform character. These desires of a heterogeneous character cloud the vision of man, who is at a loss to understand who he is, what is his duty, what is the relation between God and the individual soul, what is the purpose of human life, and what is it that distinguishes human life from other lives, and fails to realize that his salvation lies in the practice of adoration, rather than in getting lost in enjoyments. This obscuration of judgment is what is meant by one's wisdom being carried away by various desires.

The worshippers of gods referred to in this verse should not be confused with those who have been spoken of as 'Māyayāpahṛtajñānāḥ' in verse 15 on account of the expression 'Hṛtajñānāḥ' used with reference to them. Those referred to in verse 15 have been characterized by the Lord as sinful, stupid, vile among men and possessed of a demoniac disposition. This shows that the element of Tamas is predominant in them; hence they are liable to damnation (XVI. 16, 19). On the other hand, devotees who worship God and whose wisdom has been spoken of in the present verse as carried away by various forms of desires are endowed with faith and eligible for the celestial abode (VII. 23; IX. 25) and are believed to possess a nature predominantly Sattvic with a

mixture of Rajas. Thus there is a world of difference between the two types of men described in the two verses.

Actions performed by an individual through successive births leave their impressions behind, which are stored in the mind. The sum-total of these impressions goes to constitute what is known as the nature of that individual. This is what is referred to here by the word 'Prakṛtyā'. Each individual possesses a distinctive nature of his or her own. The inclination that one feels in one's mind to worship different deities is what is meant by being prompted by that nature.

The deities referred to in this verse are the sun-god, the moon-god, the gods of fire, air, water and death, Indra, the Lord of paradise, and other gods mentioned in the scriptures. By rules relating to the worship of each are meant the various rules connected with Japa or muttering of the Mantra sacred to each deity, meditation, adoration, salutation, Nyāsa (assigning the component parts of a Mantra to the various limbs of one's body), Havana (pouring oblations into the sacred fire), vows and fasts, etc., forming part of such worship. The rules of worship etc. vary according to the desire actuating the mind of the worshipper, and the nature of the deity worshipped; that is why the word 'Tam' has been used twice in the verse. There is one more point worth remembering in this connection. A man is said to worship some other deity only when he

views the deity as apart from God, the disinterestedly or with a view to pleasing supreme Deity. If, however, he worships God, he actually worships God Himself the deity as no other than God and in rather than any other deity, and the reward accordance with His commands, either of such worship too is God-Realization.

*The next two verses tell us how and in what form are the worshippers of gods rewarded for their worship:—*

यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति ।

तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥ २१ ॥

यः यः whatever; भक्तः devotee ( craving for some return ); याम् याम् whatever; तनुम् ( celestial ) form; श्रद्धया with reverence; अर्चितुम् to worship; इच्छति seeks; तस्य तस्य of that particular devotee; अहम् I; ताम् एव in that very form; श्रद्धाम् faith; अचलाम् stable; विदधामि render.

Whatever celestial form a devotee ( craving for some worldly object ) chooses to worship with reverence, I stabilize the faith of that particular devotee in that very form.

( 21 )

The use of the words 'Yah' and 'Yām' twice in this verse is intended to bring out the diversity both of the devotees and the deities worshipped by them. This shows that there are various types of devotees with interested motives, and the deities they worship are also numerous varying according to the desire and temperament of those devotees.

down in the scriptures. The devotees should also perform sacrifice offering oblations to the sacred fire in the name of the deity, meditate on his or her form, adore the Sun, Moon, Fire and other gods whose physical forms are directly perceptible to the eyes, and offer them obeisance etc. This is what is meant by worshipping the gods with faith.

The word 'Śraddhayā' in this verse implies unmitigated faith in the existence of divine intelligences, in their glory and virtues, and in the methods of their worship and its rewards. Endowed with such faith the worshipper instals with due ceremony an image made of metal or wood, clay or stone according to the pattern laid down in the scriptures, or a painting, or as an alternative forms a mental picture, and offers worship with prescribed articles according to rules, repeating the Mantra sacred to that particular deity as many times as is laid

The demonstrative adjective 'Tām' occurring in the second half of this verse has been connected with 'Tanum' in the first half instead of being taken to qualify the noun 'Śraddhām' in the second half, which is more proximate to it, only because 'Tām' is a correlative of 'Yām' and these two always go together according to the rules of Sanskrit grammar ( यत्तदोर्नित्यसम्बन्धः ). Even if it is taken to qualify 'Śraddhām' it will make no difference in the sense of the verse; for in that case it will have to be construed as 'directed towards that particular god ( तत्तत्तनुविषयिणीम् )'.

स तया श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्या राधनमीहते ।

लभते च ततः कामान्मयैव विहितान् हि तान् ॥ २२ ॥

सः he (the devotee referred to in the preceding verse); तया श्रद्धया with such faith; युक्तः endowed; तस्याः of that particular deity (whom he chooses to worship); राधनम् worship; ईहते undertakes; च and; ततः through that deity; मया by Me; एव alone; विहितान् ordained; तान् those; कामान् desired enjoyments; हि positively; लभते obtains.

Endowed with such faith he worships that particular deity and obtains through him without doubt his desired enjoyments as ordained by Myself. (22)

In this verse the Lord shows that the devotee worships the deity of his choice according to the rules laid down in the scriptures, and as a reward for such worship obtains from the deity only such of his coveted enjoyments as have been preordained by the Lord. The celestials have not been authorized to give either more or less than what is ordained by the Lord. This shows that the position of the celestials in the divine government is more or less similar to that of constitutionally functioning officers presiding over different departments of administration in a well-

established Government. If such an officer desires to reward the services of an individual, he can bestow only as much as the individual is entitled to receive under rules for such services, and as the officer is empowered to give.

Some people are apt to take 'Hi' and 'Tān' together as one word 'Hitān' (conducive to good) and connect it with 'Kāmān' (enjoyments). But such an interpretation will be unwarranted for the simple reason that objects of enjoyment are anything but conducive to the interests of anyone in the real sense of the term.

*Now, disparaging the fruit of worship of other gods referred to above as perishable, the Lord glorifies the reward of His own worship.*

अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद्भवत्यल्पमेधसाम् ।

देवान्देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि ॥ २३ ॥

तु however; अल्पमेधसाम् तेषाम् gained by these people of small understanding; तत् that; फलम् fruit; अन्तवत् having an end, perishable; भवति is; देवयजः the worshippers of gods; देवान् the gods; यान्ति attain; मद्भक्ताः My devotees (howsoever they worship Me); माम् to Me; अपि alone; यान्ति (eventually) come.

The fruit gained by these people of small understanding, however, is perishable. The worshippers of gods attain the gods; whereas My devotees, howsoever they worship Me, eventually come to Me and Me alone. (23)

Though disparaged as "men of small understanding", the worshippers of gods referred to in this verse are far superior to the vile men who while abstaining from the worship of God are engaged in sinful acts, and have been denounced in verse 15 as stupid and possessed of a devilish disposition, inasmuch as they are

not addicted to sin and worship the higher intelligences according to the procedure laid down in the scriptures, and are neither wholly devoid of intelligence nor possessed of a demoniac nature. They are certainly inferior to the devotees of God and deficient in intellect inasmuch as they worship the other deities as apart from God, and that too under the prompting of desires and for obtaining objects of enjoyment. Had their intellect not been deficient, they would have certainly grasped the truth that it is God Himself who in the form of so many deities receives all kinds of worship and oblations offered into the sacred fire and that God alone is the supreme Lord of all (V. 29; IX. 24). It is because of this deficiency of intellect that they obtain an utterly insignificant and perishable reward for their sacrificial performances and other stupendous undertakings involving such arduous labour. Had they been wise and taken so much pains over the worship of God Himself with a sense of His glory, or had they worshipped the other deities as identical with the supreme Deity and with a view to pleasing Him, they could have attained with that much labour that great and rare fruit wherein lies the fulfilment of human existence.

Reaching the abode of the deity worshipped by them the devotees of gods attain nearness of the deity and a form similar to that of the deity and obtain celestial enjoyments peculiar to that region; this is what is meant by attaining the gods. This is the highest fruit obtained through worship of the gods; but all worshippers of gods do not obtain even this fruit. Many of them, who take to such worship for obtaining trivial and momentary enjoyments like the possession of a wife, progeny, wealth, honour and distinction etc., do not go beyond obtaining their desired objects of enjoyment. A few of them whose faith in their chosen deity has particularly developed and who love the deity more than the enjoyments of the world and remember the object of worship at the moment of death, migrate

to the celestial worlds. But it should be borne in mind that the gods, the enjoyments obtained through them, and the worlds inhabited by them are all perishable. It is therefore that the fruit of their worship has been denounced as 'perishable'.

Constant residence by the side of the Lord in His own supreme eternal divine Abode, or union with God through identity with Him, both these are covered by the term "God-Realization". In the eyes of the devotee of the enlightened type the whole world is a manifestation of God, so that he is already united with God at all times; hence the question of attaining God does not arise in his case at all. The devotee of the 'Jijñāsu' type too, seeking as he does to know the truth about God, realizes Him as soon as the knowledge of that Truth dawns upon him. As for the other two types, viz., the Arthārthi and the Ārta, they too attain none else than God through His grace. God is supremely merciful and the greatest friend of a soul. He does only that which is conducive to the best interests of the devotee,—which ensures his speedy access to Him. He sternly refuses to grant the prayer or avert the calamity of a devotee, even though the latter is insistent in his demand through ignorance, if by granting that prayer or averting that danger He should really be doing a disservice to him. He fulfils only those desires the satisfaction of which enhances the devotee's faith in, and love for the Lord. In this way the devotees of God, besides realizing the object of their desire, eventually succeed in realizing God Himself. The use of the word 'Api' at the end of the verse is intended to bring out this point.

In case a devotee having once forged a devotional link with God, with whatever object it may be, seeks to undo it, it is God's nature not to allow him to do so.

Herein lies the glory of devotion to God. Having conferred on the devotee the object of his desire, or even withholding such object from him, if the same is likely to prove injurious in the long run, the spirit of devotion to God does not die. It stays in a dormant state within the heart of the devotee, and draws him to God whenever an opportunity presents

itself. The boon of devotion once obtained, through whatever cause it may be, does not leave the devotee, even after many births, till it has brought him face to face with God. And once the devotee has realized God, the question of remission of devotion does not arise at all. In that state the devotee, the spirit of devotion and the deity become indistinguishably one.

*The question here arises: If God is so full of love, and such a boundless ocean of mercy, that He invariably vouchsafes His realization to his worshippers howsoever they may worship Him, how is it that all of us do not take to His worship? In reply to this query, the Lord says:—*

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।

परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥ २४ ॥

अबुद्धयः the ignorant; मम My; अनुत्तमम् unsurpassable; अव्ययम् undecaying; परम् supreme; भावम् nature; अजानन्तः not knowing; अव्यक्तम् beyond the reach of mind and senses; माम् Me (the supreme Spirit who is all truth, all knowledge and all bliss); व्यक्तिम् आपन्नम् to have assumed a finite form through birth (as an ordinary human being); मन्यन्ते believe.

Not knowing My unsurpassable and undecaying supreme nature, the ignorant believe Me, the supreme Spirit beyond the reach of mind and senses, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, to have assumed a finite form through birth (as an ordinary human being). ( 24 )

The word 'Abuddhayah' refers to the ignorant people who have no faith in the virtues, glory, reality and sports etc. of the Lord, and whose intellect is not only clouded with infatuation and bewildered by thoughts of the world but is also wholly enmeshed in the web of sophistry. It is something beyond their comprehension that the entire creation is but an amplification of the twofold Nature of God, and that being the ultimate substratum of this twofold nature, God alone is supreme, and there is none who surpasses Him. His inconceivable and indescribable reality, character, glory and incomparable virtues cannot be rightly grasped through mind or described

through speech. It is just in order to extend His helping hand to the creatures of this world and take them under His protection out of His infinite compassion and love for the suppliant that the Lord manifests Himself in various forms with all His power, maintaining His character as the unborn, imperishable, supreme Lord, and plunges the entire creation in an unbounded and unruffled ocean of supreme joy through His transcendent sports. This is what has been referred to here as the eternal, unsurpassed and supreme nature of God.

Being altogether beyond the ken of the material mind and senses, both the

Absolute and the Qualified aspects of God are really unmanifest and supersensuous. God Almighty, who is unborn, immortal and unmanifest, manifests Himself before the world in human and other forms, concealing His identity behind the veil of His Yogamāyā; His reality, therefore, remains practically unmanifest all the time. It is therefore that ignorant men, who have no knowledge of the truth, mysteries, virtues, and glory of the Lord, instead of regarding Him as the unborn and immortal Deity, who is beyond the reach of the mind and senses, look upon Him as an ordinary human being having a finite form.

Those who are inclined to the parochial view that God is ever unmanifest and unqualified and can never manifest Himself, are apt to take this verse to mean that "only ignorant men look upon God who is really unmanifest, i. e., formless and absolute, as having assumed a qualified and concrete human form". But this interpretation does not appear to be sound, inasmuch as both the Qualified and Absolute aspects of God are approved and recognized by the

scriptures. The Lord Himself says, "Though unborn and immortal, and the Lord of all beings, I body Myself forth from age to age, keeping My Nature (Prakṛti) under control, for protecting the virtuous, destroying the evil-doers, and establishing Dharma on a firm footing and so on" (IV. 6, 7 and 8)." The alternative interpretation given above, therefore, conflicts with this statement of the Lord and demolishes the doctrine of Divine Descent, which can never be the intention of the Gītā.

Neither can the verse be interpreted to mean that "Only ignorant fools hold God with attributes appearing in a visible human form as unmanifest, that is, without attributes and without form." For the same Lord who is visible in an embodied form with attributes is also without form and attributes. Therefore, how can a man who knows this real truth be dubbed as ignorant? The Lord Himself says: "All this is pervaded by Me in My unmanifest aspect (IX. 4)." Therefore, the construction that has been put upon this verse appears to be the only sound interpretation.

*It may be asked here: Why do people regard the Almighty Lord, appearing in human form, as an ordinary mortal? In reply to this, the Lord says:—*

नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः ।

मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् ॥ २५ ॥

योगमायासमावृतः veiled by ( My ) Yogamāyā ( divine potency ); अहम् I; सर्वस्य to all; प्रकाशः manifest; न ( am ) not; अयम् this; मूढः ignorant; लोकः world; माम् Me; अजम् unborn; अव्ययम् ( and ) imperishable; न not; अभिजानाति recognizes.

Veiled by My Yogamāyā ( divine potency ), I am not manifest to all. Hence these ignorant folk fail to recognize Me, the unborn and imperishable Supreme Deity ( i. e., consider Me as subject to birth and death ). ( 25 )

The word 'Yogamāyā' denotes that divine potency of God by which He appears in and conceals various forms, and which is referred to as 'Ātma-Māyā' in IV. 6. When the Lord manifests Himself in a human or other such form, He spreads the charm of this Māyā all about Himself and remains hidden behind this veil, even as an actor when he impersonates another character disguises

his identity through his Mâyā or his-  
trionic tricks. This is what is meant by  
the Lord being veiled by 'Yogamâyā'.

When the Lord keeps Himself veiled  
by His Yogamâyā, the vision of ordinary  
men cannot pierce that veil; hence the  
majority of men regard Him as an ordinary  
human being like themselves. This is  
what is meant by His not being manifest  
to all. He reveals His identity to those alone  
who are His loving devotees and possess  
full faith in and reverence for His virtues,  
glory, true character and pastimes, and to  
whom He desires to make Himself known.

In common parlance we speak of the  
sun being veiled by the cloud; but, in  
reality, the sun never gets veiled, only  
the vision of people is obstructed by the  
cloud. If the sun got really veiled,  
there could be no light anywhere in any  
part of the universe. Even so, God is  
never really veiled by Mâyā; if He got  
veiled, no devotee could ever gain a  
true vision of God. It is only with ref-  
erence to the foolish and ignorant folk

that He is said to be veiled. As a matter  
of fact, even the analogy of the sun does  
not apply to God; for a finite thing can  
never bear comparison with the infinite.  
The illustration of the sun has been  
employed only to convey a rough idea  
of the truth.

The use of the demonstrative adjective  
'Ayam' before 'Lokaḥ' indicates that the  
words refer to all kinds of ordinary  
ignorant people, other than the devotees  
of God, no matter whether they are  
virtuous or sinful, and not to any particular  
class.

Due to lack of reverence and love for  
the Lord the ordinary ignorant folk, not  
knowing His real nature, virtues, glory,  
sports and mysteries, labour under the  
delusion that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was an ordinary  
human being like themselves, subject to  
birth and death. They fail to recognize  
the fact that He was the unborn and  
imperishable God Himself, the embodi-  
ment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss.

*The Lord referred to Himself above as veiled by His Yogamâyā. This should not, however, be taken to mean that just as a man hiding himself behind a thick curtain can neither see nor be seen by those on the other side of the curtain, even so God too fails to perceive those who are unable to see Him. In order to clarify this and also to indicate that Yogamâyā is only a potency of God wholly subservient to Him and can never screen His Divine Knowledge, the Lord says :—*

वेदाहं समतीतानि वर्तमानानि चार्जुन ।

भविष्याणि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन ॥ २६ ॥

अर्जुन O Arjuna; समतीतानि belonging to the past; च and; वर्तमानानि existing  
at present; च so also; भविष्याणि those that are yet to come; भूतानि (all)  
beings; अहम् I; वेद know; तु but; माम् Me; कश्चन न none (who is devoid of  
faith and devotion); वेद knows.

Arjuna, I know all beings, past as well as present, nay, even those  
that are yet to come; but none (devoid of faith and reverence)  
knows Me.

The word 'Bhūtāni' in this verse stands for all living beings, both moving and immobile, such as gods, men, beasts, birds, insects and moths etc. The Lord says that He knows how and in what different species all these beings were born and existed at different times during the numberless Kalpas that have gone by, and what they did in those forms. He also knows how, in what particular species of life and in what part of the universe each one of them has been born in the present Kalpa, and what they are doing. Similarly, He knows how and what form each one of them will take and where will it be born in the coming Kalpas and what it will do.

Even this statement has been made only from the point of view of the world, inasmuch as the distinction of past, present and future does not exist in the eyes of God. In His unitary consciousness, which constitutes His very being, everything is ever patent and present. In fact, He is the great spirit of Time ( Mahā-kāla ), the basis of all conceptions of time; hence nothing is hidden from His view.

*This gives rise to the question: How is it that none of the ignorant men who are devoid of faith and devotion is able to know Him? The Lord proceeds to answer this question in the next verse:—*

इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन द्वन्द्वमोहेन भारत ।

सर्वभूतानि सम्मोहं सर्गे यान्ति परंतप ॥ २७ ॥

पंतप O chastiser of foes; भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; सर्गे in this world; इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन द्वन्द्वमोहेन through delusion in the shape of pairs of opposites ( such as pleasure and pain etc. ) born of desire and hatred; सर्वभूतानि all living creatures; सम्मोहम् to infatuation; यान्ति are falling a prey.

O valiant Arjuna, through delusion in the shape of pairs of opposites ( such as pleasure and pain etc. ), born of desire and hatred, all living creatures in this world are falling a prey to infatuation. ( 27 )

The words 'Itchhā' and 'Dweṣa' in this verse stand for 'attraction' and 'repulsion', which have been referred to by the Lord in III. 34 as the two principal enemies standing in the way of man's spiritual progress, and which have been

The use of the indeclinable 'Tu' is intended to bring out the utter dissimilarity of God from the Jivas.

In verse 3 of this chapter the Lord has already said, "Among thousands of men scarce one knows Me in reality." Again, in verse 30, we shall read: "They know My integral being, comprising Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva and Adhiyajña." In XI. 54 also the Lord will be found to say, "Through single-minded devotion, can I be directly known in essence, perceived by men, and, even entered into." Therefore, the word 'Kāśhana' in this verse should be understood to mean 'anyone among the ordinary ignorant men, other than the Lord's own devotees'. It is in order to bring out this point that the words "devoid of faith and devotion" have been added after 'Kāśhana' within brackets. The next verse speaks of delusion in the shape of pairs of opposites ( born of attraction and repulsion ) as the cause of ignorance, which too proves that devotees who are free from likes and dislikes are in a position to know Him.



further declared, under the names of 'desire' and 'wrath', as the two main incentives to sin and the enemies of mankind (III. 37). The pairs of opposites like joy and grief, pleasure and pain etc., which proceed from these two impulses are instrumental in tightening the hold of ignorance on the Jiva. That is why these two have been called by the name of 'delusion'.

The word 'Sarvabhūtāni' stands for the generality of men, excluding the devotees who worship God with true

reverence and faith. Falling a prey to infatuation in the form of pairs of opposites like joy and grief, pleasure and pain etc., born of desire and hatred, they lose sight of the supreme goal of their life and ignore the practice of adoration and remembrance of God. Regarding the transient and momentary enjoyments of the world, which are productive of sorrow and fear, as a fount of delight, they continue to waste their precious lives in accumulating and enjoying those pleasures. This is what is meant by their falling a prey to infatuation.

*The adjective 'Sarva' compounded with 'Bhūtāni' is apt to create a wrong impression in the mind of the hearer that all beings without exception are falling a prey to infatuation in the shape of pairs of opposites. Therefore, in order to obviate this misconception, the Lord says:—*

येषां त्वन्तगतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणाम् ।

ते द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां दृढव्रताः ॥ २८ ॥

तु but; येषाम् whose; पुण्यकर्मणाम् जनानाम् of men of virtuous deeds (performed in a disinterested spirit); पापम् sin; अन्तगतम् (has) come to an end; ते these; द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ताः freed from delusion in the shape of pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain, joy and grief, etc. (born of attraction and repulsion); दृढव्रताः of firm resolve; माम् Me; भजन्ते worship (in every way).

But those men of virtuous deeds whose sins have come to an end, being freed from delusion in the shape of pairs of opposites (born of attraction and repulsion), worship Me with a firm resolve in every way. (28)

The indeclinable 'Tu' has been used to distinguish the great devotees of God from the ordinary men of the world.

The first half of the verse refers to those blessed souls who have been performing through successive births noble deeds enjoined by the scriptures, such as the performance of sacrifices, charity and penance, etc., and practising devotion to God, who being prompted by latencies of past lives and good association perform noble deeds in a disinterested way and practise adoration of God even in the current life and who

have attained purity of heart due to the total eradication of all evils in the shape of vicious tendencies and activities.

He alone is said to be free from delusion in the shape of pairs of opposites, who never and under no circumstance loses his balance of mind either in the midst of worldly joys and sorrows etc., or in their absence.

'Dṛḍhāvratāḥ' refers to those devotees of firm resolve who remaining wholly undaunted by the greatest of temptations and impediments triumph over them all

by dint of their adoration, and most resolutely adhere to their pious and devotional views and vows without budging an inch from them.

'Worshipping God in every way' means recognizing Him as all-pervading, all-supporting, all-powerful, the Universal Soul and the Highest and Best Person and devoting all one's external and internal organs exclusively to His service. In other words, to ascertain the truth about God by the intellect, to reflect by the mind on the virtues, glory and reality of God

and the secrets of His sports, to chant His names and praises by the lips, to offer salutation to Him by bowing the head, to employ the hands in His worship as well as in the service of the miserable and the distressed etc., who are His living embodiments, to use the eyes in beholding His images, to use the feet in visiting temples and sacred places etc. and offering all one's possessions wholly and solely to God to make oneself completely subservient to His and His will alone—all this is included in His all-round worship.

*This naturally raises the question: What does such a sinless and virtuous devotee, who worships God with a firm resolve, seek, and what is the reward obtained by him? In reply to this the Lord says in the next two verses that such a devotee of firm resolve comes to know Him properly in His integral being, i. e., attains Him:—*

जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति ये ।

ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलम् ॥ २९ ॥

साधिभूताधिदैवं मां साधियज्ञं च ये विदुः ।

प्रयाणकालेऽपि च मां ते विदुर्युक्तचेतसः ॥ ३० ॥

ये who; माम् Me; आश्रित्य taking refuge in; जरामरणमोक्षाय for deliverance from old age and death; यतन्ति strive; ते they; तत् that; ब्रह्म Brahma (the Absolute); कृत्स्नम् अध्यात्मम् the whole Adhyātma (the totality of Jivas or embodied souls); अखिलम् कर्म the entire field of Karma (action); च and; साधिभूताधिदैवम् together with Adhibhūta (the field of Matter) and Adhidaiva (Brahmā, i. e., the Creator); च and; साधियज्ञम् along with Adhiyajña (the unmanifest Divinity dwelling in the heart of all beings as their witness); माम् Me (in My integral being); विदुः know; च and; युक्तचेतसः possessed of a steadfast mind; ये who; प्रयाणकाले at the hour of death; अपि even; विदुः know (thus); ते they (too); माम् Me (alone); विदुः know.

They who, having taken refuge in Me, strive for deliverance from old age and death know Brahma (the Absolute), the whole Adhyātma (the totality of Jivas or embodied souls), and the entire field of Karma (action) as well as My integral being, comprising Adhibhūta (the field of Matter), Adhidaiva (Brahmā) and Adhiyajña (the unmanifest Divinity dwelling in the heart of all beings as their witness). And they who,

possessed of a steadfast mind, know thus even at the hour of death, they too know Me alone. ( 29, 30 )

Deliverance from old age and death is impossible so long as one does not secure immunity from birth; and immunity from birth is attained only when the Jiva is wholly freed from the bondage of Karma caused by ignorance, and realizes God. Realization of God, again, is attained only through constant practice of adoration carried on at all times with firm determination and in a disinterested way. And such adoration is possible only when man, taking recourse to the company of holy men, is freed from sins, and totally renounces all the demoniac impulses of the mind. In this very chapter the Lord has already said, "Foolish and wretched men of evil deeds, who have embraced the demoniac nature, do not worship Me" (VII. 15); it is therefore that in verse 27 as well, while pointing out the reason why people fail to know God, it has been stated that "through delusion in the shape of pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain etc. born of desire and hatred, all beings remain wholly merged in ignorance." The mind of men of this type remains crowded with desires for various kinds of enjoyments, and the desire for deliverance from birth and death, which follows the eradication of all other desires, does not awaken in their mind at all. It is therefore that while pronouncing His verdict as to who is eligible for consummate knowledge of God it has been stated in verse 28 that 'his sins having come to an end, he performs virtuous deeds, and being freed from the pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain etc., worships God with a firm resolve. The mind of such a sinless person alone is possessed with the blessed desire of being rid of the whirligig of birth and death, and knowing and attaining God at the earliest moment. It is therefore that the Lord says, he alone who, giving up dependence on all worldly objects depends wholly and

solely on God and keeps his mind and intellect constantly devoted to God alone with unwavering faith is said to strive having taken refuge in God.

In verse 1 of this chapter the Lord said to Arjuna, "With the mind attached to Me (मय्यासक्तमनाः) and practising Yoga (योगं युजन्) with complete dependence on Me (मदाश्रयः) you will know Me in entirety." In these two concluding verses, substituting the word 'Yuktachetasah' (possessed of a steadfast mind) for 'Mayyāsaktamanāh', 'Mām Āśritya' (taking refuge in Me) for 'Madāśrayah' and 'Yatanti' (strive) for "Yogam Yuñjan", the Lord repeats the same idea, and says that he who strives having taken refuge in Him and worships Him with a firm resolve as mentioned in verse 28 above and with his mind fixed on Him knows Him in His integral being.

The word 'Brahma', qualified by the adjective 'Tat' points to the absolute and formless Supreme Reality or Supreme Spirit, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss; and knowledge of Brahma means full realization and direct perception of the truth of that Supreme Reality or Supreme Spirit. The term 'Adhyātma', with its attribute 'Kṛtsna', stands for the totality of individual souls, referred to by the Lord in this chapter as His Higher Nature (Parā Prakṛti), and in Chapter XV as the 'Akṣara', or imperishable soul. And Knowledge of 'Adhyātma' means knowledge of the fact that it is God Himself, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, who appears as many in the form of the individual souls; in fact, the whole 'Adhyātma', or the totality of Jivas, has no separate existence from God. Again, the primeval volition of God, also known as 'Visarga' (discharge of spirits), from which all beings and all activities originate, is referred to as 'Karma' (this

will be discussed in greater detail while explaining verse 3 of Chapter VIII). And knowledge of the entire field of action consists in knowing the fact that being God's volition, this 'Karma' is identical with God.

The term 'Adhibhūta' covers the whole range of perishable matter, which the Lord has referred to in this chapter as His lower Nature (Aparā Prakṛti), and in Chapter XV as the 'Kṣara Puruṣa'. The Creator (Hiraṇyagarbha) who ensouls the totality of subtle bodies and who has been spoken of as 'Brahmā' in Chapter VIII is referred to as 'Adhidaiva'; and the term 'Adhiyajña' stands for that unmanifest aspect of God who pervades within the heart of all beings as the Inner Witness, and has been referred to in verses, 4, 5 and 6 of Chapter IX.

Brahma, or the Absolute, Adhyātma or the totality of Jivas, Karma or the primeval volition of God, Adhibhūta or the field of Matter, Adhidaiva or Brahmā (Creator) and Adhiyajña or the Inner Witness—all these are different aspects of one and the same God. The totality of these constitute His integral being. It was this integral being that the Lord promised in the beginning of this chapter to discuss.

Again, it is this very integral Divinity that He has referred to in verse 7, saying, "There is nothing else whatsoever besides Me, Arjuna", and in verse 12 saying, "Whatever other entities are born of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, know them all as evolved from Me alone," as well as in verse 19 saying, "All this is God"; and the Chapter has been concluded with a description of that very being in the words as stated above. To know all this, that is to say, to realize that just as the atom of water, vapour, cloud, smoke, water and ice—all these are nothing but different forms of water, even so Brahma, Adhyātma, Karma, Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva and Adhiyajña, all these are nothing but God, is the same as gaining the knowledge of Integral Brahma or God.

\* The word 'Api' added after 'Prayānakāle' in the second half of verse 30 indicates that to say nothing of those who come to know God in His entirety as mentioned above according to the maxim "Everything is God" before death, even those who come to know Him in His entirety even at the hour of death, know Him in reality, i.e., attain Him. The word 'Api' has been similarly used while glorifying the state of Brahmic Bliss at the end of Chapter II too.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां  
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे ज्ञानविज्ञान-  
योगो नाम सप्तमोऽध्यायः ॥ ७ ॥

*Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma,  
the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa  
and Arjuna, ends the seventh chapter entitled  
"The Yoga of Jñāna (Knowledge of  
Nirguṇa Brahma) and Vijñāna  
(Knowledge of manifest  
Divinity)."*





## Chapter VIII

The words 'Akṣara' and 'Brahma' stand for both the qualified (VIII. 21,24) and absolute (VIII. 3,11) aspects of God, and the appellation of God 'OM' is also designated as 'Akṣara' and 'Brahma' (VIII. 13). The present chapter has been given the title of 'Akṣarabrahmayoga' (The Yoga of the Indestructible Brahma), inasmuch as it deals with both the qualified and absolute aspects of God, as well as with 'OM'.

Title of  
the  
Chapter

Verses 1 and 2 of this chapter embody the seven questions asked by Arjuna regarding Brahma, Adhyātma and so on. Briefly answering these questions in verses 3 to 5 and stressing in the sixth the importance of the last thought at the time of death, the Lord exhorts Arjuna in the seventh to think of Him at all times. Verses 8 to 10 delineate the Yogic process of giving up the ghost while contemplating with devotion on the qualified and absolute aspects of God, and also point out the reward of such death. Glorifying the absolute aspect of the Spirit and showing the method of Japa and meditation on the Absolute through the process of Yogic concentration, as well as the fruit of such meditation in verses 11 to 13, the Lord declares in the fourteenth that an easy way to attain Him is to think of Him at all times with exclusive love. Pointing out in the fifteenth and the sixteenth that there is no more of rebirth for him who has realized God and that all the worlds in creation are subject to appearance and disappearance, the Lord defines the day and night of Brahmā and mentions the appearance as well as the disappearance of all created beings in verses 17 to 19. Establishing in the twentieth the existence of another eternal Unmanifest beyond the unmanifest Prakṛti, the Lord continues to speak of It in the twenty-first and the twenty-second under such names as the 'Indestructible', 'the supreme Goal', 'the supreme Abode', and 'the supreme Person', and declares exclusive Devotion as the means of attaining the same. Describing in verses 23 to 26 the bright and the dark paths and the states to which they lead, the Lord praises in the twenty-seventh the Yogī who knows the truth about these two paths and exhorts Arjuna to be a Yogī. He concludes the chapter with the twenty-eighth, pointing out therein the reward of knowing this secret.

Summary of  
the  
Chapter

*Calling upon Arjuna in verses 1 to 3 of Chapter VII to hear the truth relating to His integral Self, the Lord undertook to discuss the same and extolled those who possessed a knowledge of the same. He expounded the same truth in ways more than one and also explained at length the cause of not knowing it up to the twenty-seventh and finally concluded the chapter by praising the devotee who knows Him in entirety along with Brahma, Adhyātma, Karma, Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva and Adhiyajña. Failing*

Link of  
the  
Discourse

*to grasp fully the inwardness of Brahma, Adhyātma, Karma, Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva and Adhiyajña as described in verses 29 and 30 and the secret of knowing God at the time of death, Arjuna proceeds to ask his seven questions concerning these seven categories in the first two verses of this chapter.*

अर्जुन उवाच

किं तद् ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम ।

अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदैवं किमुच्यते ॥ १ ॥

पुरुषोत्तम O Best among men; तत् that; ब्रह्म Brahma ( Absolute ); किम् what ( is ); अध्यात्मम् Adhyātma ( Spirit ); किम् what ( is ); कर्म Karma ( Action ); किम् what ( is ); अधिभूतम् Adhibhūta ( Matter ); किम् what; प्रोक्तम् has been designated as; च and; अधिदैवम् Adhidaiva ( divine intelligence ); किम् what; उच्यते is spoken of as.

Arjuna said: Kṛṣṇa, what is that Brahma ( Absolute ), what is Adhyātma ( Spirit ), and what is Karma ( Action )? What is called Adhibhūta ( Matter ) and what is termed as Adhidaiva ( divine intelligence )? ( 1 )

The word 'Brahma' is used to denote various entities such as the Vedas, the Creator, the absolute Divinity, Prakṛti ( Primordial Matter ) and OM etc. The object of Arjuna's question is to know which of the above entities is referred to in the present context.

Similarly, the word 'Adhyātma' signifies the body, the senses, mind, intellect, the individual soul, the Oversoul and many more such entities. Arjuna seeks to know by this verse which of the above is meant by the Lord when He speaks of 'Adhyātma' in the present context.

It is doubtful, again, whether 'Karma' denotes activity in general or noble pursuits such as the performance of sacrifices, charity and so on. Or does it signify the threefold varieties of past action, such as 'Prārabdha' ( that which has begun to bear fruit in the shape of a pleasurable or painful experience ) etc. Or again, does it denote the act of crea-

tion of this universe by God? Arjuna's intention is to have this point elucidated.

Similarly, does the word 'Adhibhūta' mean the five gross elements, or the whole order of living beings, the entire range of objective reality or any other substance? Arjuna's query: 'What is called Adhibhūta?' is intended to clear up this doubt.

Finally, Arjuna wants to know whether the term 'Adhidaiva' means a particular deity presiding over some material phenomenon, or destiny, or Hiraṇyagarbha ( the Creator ), the individual soul, or any other entity.

Addressing the Lord as 'Puruṣottama' in this verse, Arjuna intends to convey that He is the best of all persons, omniscient, omnipotent, the controller and support of all. He thereby suggests that no one else in the world can answer his queries as satisfactorily and correctly as the Lord can do.

अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन्मधुसूदन ।

प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥ २ ॥

मधुसूदन O killer of the demon Madhu, *i.e.*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa; अत्र here; अधियज्ञः Adhiyajña (the Lord of all sacrifices); कः who (is); अस्मिन् देहे in this body; कथम् how (does it dwell); च and; नियतात्मभिः by those of steadfast mind; प्रयाणकाले at the hour of death; कथम् how; ज्ञेयः to be realized; असि (You) are.

Kṛṣṇa, who is Adhiyajña here and how does he dwell in the body? And how are You to be realized at the time of death by those of steadfast mind? (2)

The object of Arjuna's query in this verse is to know whether the term 'Adhiyajña' denotes any particular deity, or God, who is the inner witness, or any other being. He further wants to know as to how that 'Adhiyajña' resides in the bodies of the various living beings, and why it is called by that name.

The word 'Niyatātmaabhiḥ' in this

verse refers to those whom the Lord described as 'Yuktachetasah' in the concluding verse of Chapter VII. With regard to those men of steadfast mind Arjuna now seeks to know how they fix their mind on God before realizing Him at the moment of death. Is it by means of breath-control, or Japa, or remembrance, or meditation, or Samādhi?

*Out of the seven questions asked by Arjuna above, the Lord now takes up first of all those relating to Brahma, Adhyātma and Karma, and briefly answers them seriatim in the following verse:—*

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते ।

भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥ ३ ॥

परमम् अक्षरम् the supreme Indestructible; ब्रह्म (is) Brahma; स्वभावः one's own self (the individual soul); अध्यात्मम् Adhyātma (the Spirit); उच्यते is called; भूतभावोद्भवकरः that which brings forth the existence of beings; विसर्गः the discharge (of spirits); कर्मसंज्ञितः is termed as Karma (Action).

Śrī Bhagavān said : The supreme Indestructible is Brahma; one's own self (the individual soul) is called Adhyātma; and the discharge of spirits, (Visarga), which brings forth the existence of beings, is called Karma (Action). (3)

By adding the qualification 'supreme' to the word 'Indestructible', the Lord intends to convey that the word 'Brahma' mentioned in VII. 29 stands for the absolute, formless Divinity, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, and not for the Vedas, Brahmā (the Creator),

Prakṛti (primordial Matter), or any other substance. 'Supreme' means the subtlest and the best. Whatever entities are denoted by the terms 'Brahma' and 'Akṣara', the supreme Reality or God (who is the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss) alone is the highest

and the best of them all; therefore, the words 'supreme Indestructible' in this verse refer to the supreme Reality or the Oversoul. This supreme Reality or Oversoul is in reality the same as God.

'Swabhāva' (Swah Bhāvah) means one's own being. It is the conscious, higher Nature of God in the form of the individual soul, which constitutes His own being. When this changeless aspect or higher nature of God permeates the lower or material Nature in the shape of body, senses, mind and intellect, etc., which all go by the name of self, and presides over them, it is termed as 'Adhyātma'. Therefore, the word 'Adhyātma' with its qualifying adjunct 'Kṛtsna' in VII. 29 should be interpreted to mean 'the totality of conscious spirits or individual souls'. This conscious higher Nature, being a part of God, is identical with God; therefore, the totality of Jivas, or 'Adhyātma' as it is called, is also identical with, or the same as, God.

The word 'Bhūta' forming part of the compound word 'Bhūtabhāvodbhavadakarah' stands for all living beings, both sentient and insentient. The 'Visarga' or discharge which brings forth the existence of beings and advances their cause, and which is the very basis of the creation and preservation of the universe, is called Karma or action. During the final dissolution all creatures of the universe, along with their individual latencies of Karma, get absorbed into God, and their varying natures similarly lose themselves into Prakṛti or primordial Matter in a manner which is almost tantamount to absorption. At the beginning of the next creation when God wills: "I am One, let Me be many," they are brought forth again. It is this primeval resolve of God which is referred to as the discharge of spirits or consciousness in the womb of inert

Nature. This constitutes the conjunction of Spirit with Matter. This, again, represents the great discharge; and it is this discharge which is called 'Visarga'. It is this process which is responsible for bringing forth the various creatures. It is therefore that the Lord says, "The birth of all beings follows from this combination of Matter and Spirit." (XIV. 3.) This is what is meant by the springing into existence of beings. Therefore, it should be understood here that by 'Visarga' is meant that primeval resolve of God which brings forth the existence of all living beings and advances their cause. And it is the great feat of God in the shape of this Visarga which quickens inert Matter with life and activates it, with the result that there is an unceasing flow of endless Karmas in the universe till the very end of creation through final dissolution. Therefore, it is this 'Visarga' which goes by the name of Karma (action). It is this which the Lord refers to as 'the entire field of Karma or action' in VII. 29. This great discharge by God, which brings forth the existence of beings, is itself a great cosmic sacrifice. From this great sacrifice have originated the various other forms of sacrifice in the world; and the process of offering oblations of clarified butter etc. during such sacrifices has also been termed as 'Visarga'. These sacrifices also bring forth the existence of beings. The Code of Manu says:—

"The oblation thrown into the sacred fire in accordance with the Vedic injunctions goes to the sun, and showers descend from the sun; even so crop follows from rainfall and creatures take their descent from food."\* (III. 36.)

This 'Visarga' known by the name of 'Karma' is in reality nothing but the primeval resolve of God. Therefore, it is also identical with God.

*The Lord now proceeds to answer ad seriatum Arjuna's queries about Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva and Adhiyajña.*

\* अग्नौ प्रास्ताहुतिः सम्यगादित्यमुपतिष्ठते । आदित्याज्जायते वृष्टिर्वृष्टेरन्नं ततः प्रजाः ॥



अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदैवतम् ।

अधियज्ञोऽहमेवान्न देहे देहभृतां वर ॥ ४ ॥

क्षरः भावः ( all ) perishable objects; अधिभूतम् ( are ) Adhibhūta; पुरुषः the shining Puruṣa ( Brahmā ); अधिदैवतम् ( is ) Adhidaiva; च and; देहभृताम् वर O best among embodied beings, i. e., Arjuna; अत्र देहे in this body; अहम् I ( the all-pervading Deity ); एव alone; अधियज्ञः ( am ) Adhiyajña ( as the inner witness of all ).

All perishable objects are Adhibhūta; the shining Puruṣa ( Brahmā ) is Adhidaiva; and in this body I Myself, dwelling as the inner witness, am Adhiyajña, O Arjuna ! ( 4 )

The lower Nature of God, and all its evolutes, which are perishable in character, are covered by the term 'Kṣarabhāva'. It is this very category which has been spoken of as 'Kṣetra' ( the body ) in Chapter XIII, and as the 'Kṣara' Puruṣa or perishable entity in Chapter XV. This 'Kṣarabhāva' is present before us in the form of the body, senses, mind, intellect, ego, the elements and the various objects of senses, and is dependent on the Jīva; in other words, it is sustained by the conscious higher nature of God, which is the same as the soul or spirit. It is collectively known as Adhibhūta. In Chapter VII, the Lord has already declared the Aparā or lower ( insentient ) nature also as His own nature. Hence the 'Kṣarabhāva' referred to in this verse necessarily belongs to God, and is therefore identical with God. The Lord Himself says, "I am being and non-being both." ( IX. 19. )

The word 'Puruṣa' in this verse stands for the 'First Person' or 'Brahmā', who is known by the names of Sūtrātmā, Hiraṇyagarbha and Prajāpati as well. It is he who represents the vital energy or life of the whole creation, sentient and insentient. All divine intelligences or deities constitute his limbs. He is the controller, lord and progenitor of all. That is why he is termed as 'Adhidaiva' ( the presiding deity ). It is God Himself who takes the form of Adhidaiva. Therefore, he too is identical with God.

Arjuna's query with reference to Adhiyajña was twofold, viz., who is Adhiyajña and how does he dwell in the body? The Lord answers both these questions in one sentence. The Lord Himself is the enjoyer and lord of all sacrifices ( V. 29; IX. 24 ), and it is He who dispenses the fruit of all actions ( VII. 22 ). Therefore, He says in this verse, "I Myself am Adhiyajña". The indeclinable 'Eva' used in this connection should be taken to imply that even 'Adhibhūta' and 'Adhidaiva' are not distinct from Him. Now in reply to the first part of the query the Lord explicitly says that He is Himself 'Adhiyajña'; but with reference to the question how he dwells in the body, He has simply hinted that He dwells 'in this body'. It is the all-pervasive aspect of God in the form of the inner witness which dwells in the body; that is why the meaning of the Lord has been made explicit by adding the words 'as the inner witness' in the translation. In His all-pervasive form as the inner witness God indwells all; it is therefore that referring to Himself as the Divine Person in verses 8 and 10 of this chapter, and as the 'eternal Unmanifest' in the twentieth, He brings out His all-pervasive and all-sustaining character in the twenty-second. Verses 4 and 5 of Chapter IX also reveal the all-pervasive character of the Unmanifest aspect of God. The Lord speaks of that unmanifest,

subtle and all-pervasive aspect of His as 'Adhiyajña' in this verse, and in order to show His identity with it openly declares: "I am Myself Adhiyajña."

In addressing Arjuna as 'the best of all embodied beings', the Lord's intention is to convey that Arjuna was a devotee

of the Lord and was thus capable of grasping His meaning from a mere hint. The hint given by the Lord, viz., that He Himself is 'Adhiyajña', should therefore suffice to make it clear to him that He is everything. It should not be difficult for Arjuna to understand this.

*Replying thus to six of the seven queries of Arjuna, the Lord now commences His reply to the seventh and the last question relating to the time of death.*

अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम् ।

यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥ ५ ॥

यः who; अन्तकाले at the hour of death; च even; माम् Me; एव alone; स्मरन् thinking of; कलेवरम् the body; मुक्त्वा leaving; प्रयाति departs; सः he; मद्भावं My own state; याति attains; अत्र about this; संशयः doubt; न not; अस्ति there is.

He who departs from the body, thinking of Me alone even at the time of death, attains My state; there is no doubt about it. (5)

The indeclinable 'Cha' has been used in this verse in the sense of 'Api' (even). By the use of this word the Lord has brought out the importance of birth in the human species. The point is to show that birth in the human species is attained by the grace of God only after the Jiva has passed through eighty million and four hundred thousand sub-human species. If man fails to realize God even after obtaining such a rare opportunity, there is no knowing what a sorry plight he may come to and when he will be blessed with a human body again. Realizing this, one can turn to account one's human life up to the very last moment, if he cares to do so. Thus making a special occasion of the hour of death, the Lord says that to say nothing of those who think exclusively of Him at all times, even he who remembers Him even up to the last moment of his life undoubtedly realizes Him. Thus without minimizing the efficacy of constant remembrance of God, the Lord lays down that one who remembers God even at

the moment of departure from the body attains God.

The word 'Mām' (Me) in this verse stands for that integral Divinity which the Lord undertook in the very opening verse of Chapter VII to discuss, and which He actually discussed with proper explanation in verses 29 and 30 of the same chapter. All aspects of God are included in that integral Divinity. Even if anyone, therefore, fixes his mind on a particular form knowing it to be God, it is Him alone that one remembers. And the names, virtues, glory and stories etc. connected with His various descents also serve to awaken His thought; for in recalling these God is automatically recalled. Hence to remember the names, virtues, glory and sports etc. of God is equivalent to remembrance of God Himself.

Interposition of the word 'Eva' between 'Mām' and 'Smāran' indicates that giving up the thought of one's father and mother, kith and kin, wife and

progeny, wealth and power, honour and prestige and even heavenly bliss etc., such a man remembers God alone. The organ of thought is mind. The use of the word 'Eva', which shuts out every other thought, therefore indicates that his mind is fixed exclusively on God.

Attainment of the divine state covers both liberation in any of its six forms, such as Sāyujya or oneness with the Lord, and realization of the Absolute. Which

particular state the practicant attains is dependent on his choice. A practicant reaches the state on which he sets his heart.

Concluding the verse by saying, "there is no doubt about it", the Lord lays particular emphasis on the fact that he who remembers Him at the last moment of his life is sure to realize Him, no matter where and when he dies, and how he has conducted himself in the past. His liberation is assured.

*It has been stated above that he who dies with his thought fixed on God attains God and God alone. This naturally raises the question whether this holds good particularly in the case of God-remembrance alone or it is true of every other thought. Anticipating this question the Lord says:—*

यं यं वापि स्मरन् भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम् ।  
तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावितः ॥ ६ ॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kunti, Arjuna; अन्ते at the last (moment); यम् यम् whatever; भावम् entity; वा अपि no matter; स्मरन् thinking of; कलेवरम् the body; त्यजति (one) leaves; तम् तम् that and that; एव alone; एति (one) attains; सदा ever; तद्भावभावितः absorbed in its thought.

Arjuna, thinking of whatever entity one leaves the body at the time of death, that and that alone one attains, being ever absorbed in its thought. (6)

The word 'Bhāva' in this verse stands for all categories of being, both material and spiritual, such as God, celestial beings, men, beasts, birds, insects, moths, plants, land, house, etc.

The word 'Ante' (last moment) here denotes the point of time when the individual soul, together with the life-breath, senses, mind and intellect, gets disjoined from the physical body.

x x x  
Verses 14 and 15 of Chapter XIV declare the three modes of Prakṛti, viz. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas (the principles of harmony, motion and inertia) as the factors determining one's birth in a higher or lower species; whereas verse 16 of the

same chapter attributes such birth to the Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic character of one's activities in life. The present verse, however, holds the last thought at the time of death responsible for the nature of one's coming birth. The seeming contradiction between these two kinds of statements will disappear if we examine them more closely, which we shall presently do.

Whatever action a man performs leaves its impressions on his mind in the form of a tendency. The mind thus remains crowded with innumerable tendencies of this kind. Man's thoughts and remembrances are determined by these latencies as assisted by an exciting cause. When latencies of the

Sattvic type come to the forefront due to the predominance of Sattvic actions, man's character becomes predominantly Sattvic, and his thoughts also become Sattvic. Even so, when the Rajasic and Tamasic tendencies gain the upper hand due to predominance of Rajasic or Tamasic actions, man's character becomes predominantly Rajasic or Tamasic and his thoughts also conform to his character. Thus there being unity between action, character and thought, there can be no objection to our calling any of them as the determining cause of a future birth. For that makes no difference as a matter of fact.

Now one can easily understand that a man dying with the thought of a celestial, human being, animal or plant or any other living object uppermost in his mind is reborn in a corresponding species. But how does a man who dies with the thought of a lifeless material object, such as land or a house, attain the object in his next birth? Our answer to this question is that a person dying with the thought of land, house etc. takes birth in a higher or lower species according to his nature and the character of his actions. And born in that birth, he gets material objects such as land and house etc., which were the centres of his thought at the dying moment in his former life. That is to say, in whatever species he is born, he will be connected with such objects in that very life. Just as the owner of a house identifies himself with the house, so does a bird building a nest in it, or a mouse or ant or any other animal making holes in it and living in those holes identify itself with it. This should make it clear that in every species of life one can indirectly obtain any kind of material object.

x                      x                      x

It stands to reason that thinking of whatever object man leaves the body at the time of death, he attains that very object. But the question remains: why do we think of a particular object at the time of death? In reply to this question

the Lord says that as a general rule only that thought appears at the time of death, which has constantly engaged our mind. Just as chemists and druggists infuse certain medicinal properties into a substance by soaking it again and again in a particular type of a fluid, even so man gets absorbed in the thought of an object which he repeatedly revolves in his mind under the influence of latencies of past actions as well as of his present association, environment, attachment, desire, fear and studies. The word 'Sadā' points to the constancy of thought. That is to say, whatever thought we constantly and repeatedly revolve in our mind for a sufficient length of time gets crystallized into a habit. This is what is meant by "constantly remaining absorbed in a particular thought." The general rule is that whatever thought is crystallized into a habit automatically comes to the surface of the mind at the moment of death.

Although in the majority of cases only that thought which has been uppermost in our mind throughout life comes to the forefront at the moment of death, there are exceptions to this rule. As in the case of Jada Bharata, who died with the thought of a fawn which he had nurtured only during the last days of his life, the thought that has constantly and exclusively engaged our mind during the concluding portion of our life even for a short period supersedes our old habits of thought and appears on the surface of our mind at the time of death.

How our posthumous state is determined by the last thought at the hour of death can be clearly understood with the help of a homely illustration. All of us know our impression in a photograph exactly conforms to the pose that we adopt just at the moment when the photo is taken. So does the thought of a man at the moment of death determines what form he is going to assume in the next birth. Our mind at the time of death represents the film of a camera; the thought appearing in it at that time

resembles the impression taken on the film; and the physical form that we assume in our next birth represents the actual photo. Therefore, just as the photographer warns us to get ready for the photo, and just as he who shakes his limbs at that moment heedless of the photographer's warning spoils his own picture, even so God, who creates all forms, gives the warning to man that the time of taking the picture of his next embodiment is very near, the photo may be taken at any moment, and if he does not take care, his picture may be spoiled. Taking heed in this case consists in practising constant remembrance of God; and thinking of objects other than God is equivalent to spoiling the picture.

*Thinking of whatever object a man dies, that very object does he attain in his next life. And generally that thought alone haunts a man at the time of death, which has mostly engaged his mind during his lifetime. This having been established, it becomes indispensable for one who aspires for God-Realization to remember God at the last moment of one's life. When that last moment may suddenly arrive, no one knows. Therefore, in the next verse, the Lord exhorts Arjuna to think of Him at all times and fight.*

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।

मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मामेवैष्यस्यसंशयम् ॥ ७ ॥

tasmāt therefore; सर्वेषु कालेषु at all times; माम् Me; अनुस्मर think at all times of; च and; युध्य fight; मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिः having set your mind and intellect on Me; असंशयम् without doubt; माम् Me; एव alone; एष्यसि you will come to.

Therefore, Arjuna, think of Me at all times and fight. With mind and reason thus set on Me, you will doubtless come to Me. (7)

The word 'Tasmāt' connects this verse with the preceding two verses. The intention is to emphasize that the human body is transient; the end may come any moment. If constant remembrance of God does not become habitual with us and life departs from the body even while we are engaged in the thought of enjoyments of the world, human life, which is a passport for God-Realization, will have been frittered away in vain. Therefore, remembrance of God should be constantly practised.

The case for constant God-remembrance is thus fully established and it is but reasonable for the Lord to exhort Arjuna to practise the same. But why should the Lord command him in the same

breath to fight as well? Our answer to this question is that Arjuna was a Kṣatriya by birth, and participation in a righteous war is the duty of a Kṣatriya enjoined upon him by his very birth. Warfare should, therefore, be understood here to cover all activities performed with a view to discharging the obligations devolving on a man by virtue of his Varna or order in society and Āśrama or stage in life. Actions performed in a disinterested spirit as a behest from God and with a view to discharging the duties enjoined upon him by his Varna and Āśrama, make for purification of the heart. Besides this, verses 4 to 30 of Chapter III advance many other weighty reasons establishing the necessity of performing one's duty, a careful consideration of which will lead

us to conclude that the duties attaching to one's Varna and Āśrama must necessarily be performed. Commanding Arjuna to fight the Lord intends to bring out this point.

The use of the indeclinable 'Cha' is intended to give priority to remembrance over all other duties. Warfare and other duties enjoined by one's Varna and Āśrama are performed according to the need of the occasion, and in conformity with certain prescribed rules at the time appointed for them; and it is in that way that they ought to be performed. As for remembrance of God, however, man needs must perform it at all times and under all circumstances.

One may ask here: How can it be possible to carry on side by side remembrance of God, on the one hand, and such strenuous functions enjoined by one's Varna and Āśrama as participation in a fight, on the other. Our answer is that they can be easily carried on together. There are diverse ways of doing it, varying according to the ideas, taste and competence of practicers. The devotee who possesses adequate knowledge of God's virtues and glory and loves none but Him, and who knows the world not only as a creation of God but as really identical with Him and also as a stage for divine sports, ever sees God as if present before his eyes in every particle

of matter even as Prahlāda and the cowherd damsels of Vraja did; therefore, it is quite easy for him to carry on other activities side by side with constant remembrance of God. Even so the practitioner who having developed an aversion for worldly enjoyments has made God the principal object of his love, and who performs duties as enjoined by his Varna and Āśrama in a disinterested spirit as a behest from God Himself and only for His sake, can also perform other actions side by side with constant remembrance of God. Just as a rope-dancer performs acrobatic feats of various kinds while minding the balance of his feet on the rope, or even as a chauffeur chats with the inmates of his car and also goes on watching the road so as to avoid an accident, all the time focussing his attention on the wheel, even so the duties attaching to one's Varna and Āśrama can be efficiently performed even while constantly remembering God.

Grasping by the intellect the virtues and glory of God as well as the truth relating to Him and making a firm resolve with supreme faith, and constantly dwelling with the mind on God no less than on His virtues and glory with exclusive faith and love—this is what is meant by setting one's mind and reason on God. The phrase 'Madgatena Antarātmanā' at the end of Chapter VI expresses the same idea.

*Arjuna's seventh query was briefly answered in verse 5, which describes the destiny of one who dies with the thought of God uppermost in his mind. The same question is now dealt with in detail in the following three verses, which describe the final state reached by the Yogīs who having controlled the mind through the Yoga of discipline dwell on the Adhijajña aspect of God, i. e., the formless unmanifest God with attributes.*

अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।

परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन् ॥ ८ ॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन disciplined through Yoga in the form of practice of meditation; नान्यगामिना not wandering after any-

thing else; चेतसा with the mind; अनुचिन्तयन् constantly engaged in contemplation ( of God ); परमम् supremely effulgent; दिव्यम् divine; पुरुषम् Being, i. e., God; याति attains.

Arjuna, he who with his mind disciplined through Yoga in the form of practice of meditation and thinking of nothing else, is constantly engaged in contemplation of God attains the supremely effulgent divine Puruṣa ( God ). ( 8 )

Practice of the limbs of Yoga such as Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma, Pratyāhāra, Dhāraṇā and Dhyāna is called 'Abhyāsayoga'. A mind which has been thoroughly disciplined through this Yoga and remains constantly engaged in practice is called 'Abhyāsayogayukta'.

A mind which when employed in the thought of a specific object does not deviate from it even for a moment to think of any other object, or in other words, which remains constantly and exclusively fixed on the object of meditation is known as 'Nānyagāmin'. The subject of discussion here being God, the

word should be taken to refer to a mind which remains exclusively fixed on God.

The supremely effulgent divine Puruṣa mentioned in this verse is the same as the all-pervading, formless and unmanifest God with attributes, who creates, sustains, and destroys the universe, and who has been referred to as 'Adhiyajña' in verse 4 and as 'the supreme Puruṣa' in verse 22 of this chapter. Knowing Him in reality through constant meditation, and becoming one with Him is what is meant by attaining that supreme divine Puruṣa.

*Having spoken about the attainment of the divine Puruṣa, the Lord now proceeds to describe Him.*

कविं पुराणमनुशासितारमणोरणीयांसमनुस्मरेद्यः ।

सर्वस्य धातारमचिन्त्यरूपमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥ ९ ॥

यः who; कविम् all-wise; पुराणम् ageless; अनुशासितारम् Ruler of all; अणोरणीयांसम् minuter than the minute; सर्वस्य धातारम् sustainer of all; अचिन्त्यरूपम् having a form beyond human conception; आदित्यवर्णम् refulgent as the sun; तमसः परस्तात् far beyond the darkness of ignorance; अनुस्मरेत् contemplates on;

He who contemplates on the all-wise, ageless Being, the Ruler of all, subtler than the subtle, the universal sustainer, possessing a Form beyond human conception, refulgent like the sun and far beyond the darkness of ignorance, ( 9 )

Bringing out the glory of the supreme divine Puruṣa, the Lord says that He is ever in the know of everything. There is nothing in the physical, astral and

causal worlds, past, present or future, visible or invisible, which He does not really know; hence He is all-wise. He is the beginning of all; no one existed

or ever came into being before Him, nor has He any cause or origin. He Himself is the origin of everything, and is the most ancient of all. Hence He is ageless. He is the universal Lord and is all-powerful and the indweller of all. He alone is the controller of all; and it is He who duly dispenses the fruit of noble deeds and misdeeds of all. Hence He is the Ruler of all. Although He is so powerful, He is exceptionally subtle. He is the greatest of all great truths or principles and is ever present in all. That is why He is realized only by the most acute intellect of men of subtle vision. It is therefore that He is called subtler than the subtle. Even though so subtle, He is verily the support of the entire universe; it is He who holds, sustains and nourishes everything and everybody. Therefore, He is the sustainer of all. Though He permeates all, and is ever engaged in sustaining and nourishing all, He is nevertheless so far beyond all, and so transcendent in character, that the mind is utterly incapable of conceiving Him in reality. He is the original source of the power of conception possessed by the mind, and the power of ratiocination possessed by the intellect. They derive their vitality and activity from the life-current flowing from Him. He ever sees them, and sees all, and continues to energize them; but they cannot perceive Him. Hence He is beyond conception. Though inconceivable, He is all effulgence and ever lends radiance to all. Even

as the sun is self-luminous, and illumines the whole universe by its light, so does that self-luminous supreme Being ever illumines all by His uninterrupted divine light of Knowledge. That is why He is spoken of as eternally shining like the sun. In Him who is an embodiment of such transcendent, eternal and infinite Knowledge, the darkness of nescience or ignorance cannot even be conceived. Just as the sun has never witnessed darkness, even so He is ever wholly beyond the darkness of ignorance. Nay, even as the inky darkness of night is dispelled by the very twilight appearing before sunrise, so does the ignorance even of a man wholly engrossed in worldly enjoyments gets dissipated by the bright rays of His luminous Knowledge. It is therefore that He is said to be far beyond the darkness of ignorance. One should always remember such a God, who is the embodiment of pure existence, absolute knowledge and unmixed bliss.\*

Although the present verse gives us to understand that God being inconceivable by nature the mind and intellect of man are unable to grasp Him, yet knowing Him as endowed with the marks mentioned in this verse we can certainly remember and contemplate on Him again and again; and such remembrance and contemplation alone enables us to realize Him in the end. It is therefore that mention has been made of the practice of God-remembrance, and it was but reasonable to do so.

*Describing thus the supreme divine Puruṣa, the Lord now proceeds to tell us the mode of Sādhana and its reward.*

प्रयाणकाले मनसाचलेन भक्त्या युक्तो योगबलेन चैव ।

भ्रुवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक् स तं परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥ १० ॥

\* The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad contains a Mantra which bears a close resemblance with this verse. It runs as follows:—

वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ।

तमेव विदित्वा तिमृत्युमेति नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय ॥ (III. 8).

"I know that great Being who is refulgent like the sun and far beyond the darkness of ignorance. It is only by knowing Him that one is able to transcend death; there is no other way to attain God."



मत्तया युक्तः full of devotion; सः he; प्रयाणकाले (even) at the hour of departure (from this world); योगबलेन by dint of Yoga; भ्रुवोः मध्ये in the space between the two eyebrows; प्राणस् the life-breath; सम्यक् firmly; आवेक्ष्य holding; च then; अचलेन मनसा (contemplating on God) with an unshaken mind; तम् that; दिव्यम् divine; परम् supreme; पुरुषम् Being; एव verily; उपैति attains.

Having by the power of Yoga firmly held the life-breath in the space between the two eyebrows even at the time of death, and then contemplating on God with a steadfast mind, full of devotion, he reaches verily that supreme divine Puruṣa (God). (10)

Supreme love for God is called Bhakti or devotion.\* 'Bhaktyā Yuktah', therefore, means one who is possessed of such Love. 'Love' is a relative term which always presupposes an object. This shows that the form of discipline referred to here is not worship of the absolute, formless Brahma as identical with oneself, which is otherwise known as Jñānayoga (the discipline of Knowledge), but Bhakti or devotion, which presupposes an object of worship other than the worshipper.

Abhyāsayoga or the Yoga of eight limbs, referred to in verse 8 above, is the Yoga spoken of in this verse. 'Power of Yoga', therefore, means control over the life-breath and the capacity to regulate its function according to will, acquired through the practice of such Yoga. In the space between the two eyebrows is located a spiritual centre which the authorities on Yoga call 'Ājñāchakra'. It is described as consisting of two petals with a triangular Yoni. The spirits of fire, the sun and the moon join in this triangle. At the time of departure for what is known as the great beyond, adepts in Yoga collect the five vital airs by the power of Yoga and lock them up once for all in this centre. It is not an easy task, a good deal of practice is required to hold the vital airs in the Ājñāchakra

in this way. There are seven sheaths in the vicinity of this Ājñāchakra, which are known by the names of Indu, Bodhinī, Nāda, Ardhachandrikā, Mahānāda, Kālā (embodying the sun, moon and fire) and Unmanī. Reaching the Unmanī sheath through the vital airs, the Jīva realizes the Supreme Puruṣa or God. There is no compulsory rebirth for him now. Either he does not take birth at all, or even if he does so he comes to this world of his own accord, or by the will of God, for the good of the world.

The process of this Sādhana can be learnt only by direct instruction from a master who has practical knowledge of Yoga. None should make any attempt to practise it merely with the help of books; for such an attempt is calculated to do more harm than good.

With reference to mind the word 'Achala' has been used in the same sense here as 'Nānyagāmin' in verse 8 of this chapter. In other words, a mind which when once fixed on the object of meditation remains rooted there and does not deviate in the least is called 'Achala' (cf. VI. 19).

The supreme divine Puruṣa referred to in this verse is the same as has been described in verses 8 and 9 above.

*Verse 5 made a brief reference to the destiny of an ordinary person who dies with the thought of God uppermost in his mind. Verses 8 to 10 then described*

*the final state of Yogis who meditate on the formless transcendent unmanifest aspect of God with attributes, known as Adhiyajña. And now, while devoting verses 11 to 13 to a description of the final state of Yogis who worship the supreme indestructible absolute formless Brahma, the Lord first of all glorifies that Brahma and undertakes to speak about Him.*

यदक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति विशन्ति यद्यतयो वीतरागाः ।

यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये ॥ ११ ॥

वेदविदः the knowers of the Veda; यत् which; अक्षरम् the Indestructible; वदन्ति term (as); वीतरागाः free from passion; यतयः striving recluses; यत् which; विशन्ति enter; यत् which; इच्छन्तः desiring; ब्रह्मचर्यम् celibacy; चरन्ति (they) practise; तत् that; पदम् (supreme) state; ते to you; संग्रहेण with brevity; प्रवक्ष्ये (I) shall speak of.

I shall tell you briefly about that supreme goal (viz., God, who is an embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss), which the knowers of the Veda term as the Indestructible, which striving recluses free from passion enter, and desiring which the celibates practise Brahmacharya. (11)

That which imparts the knowledge of God is called the Veda. This Veda has been handed down to us in the form of the four Saṃhitās or collections of hymns and the exegetic literature known as the Brāhmaṇas, such as Aitareya etc. The life and centre of the Veda is the supreme Brahma or Oversoul. He is the meaning of the Veda. The great men of wisdom who know this meaning and knowing it strive ceaselessly for its realization, and ultimately succeed in realizing it,—they alone are the true knowers of the Veda.

Only those great men of wisdom who are knowers of the Veda can speak something about that Brahma; no one else is entitled to do so. They tell us that Brahma is 'Indestructible'; in other words, it is that great Reality which never undergoes loss or diminution in any shape or form under any circumstance, and which ever remains immortal, absolute and unchanged. The Lord is speaking here of the same unmanifest

Indestructible whose worship is mentioned in XII, 3.

The word 'Yatayah' here refers to those recluses who are men of strong dispassion qualified for God-Realization, established in Brahma and possessed of spiritual qualifications of a high order.

The word 'Viśanti' (enter) in this verse has not been used in the sense that we speak of entering a house or apartment from without. It denotes the process of identification, which represents the climax of Sādhana. Brahma or God, being our own self, is ever present with us. Our error or misconception lies in mistaking that which is already attained as something unattained. The removal of this misconception or ignorance is what is meant by entering in God.

Etymologically speaking, 'Brahmacharya' means to live and move in Brahma, or to walk in the path leading to Brahma, i.e., to follow practices which may enable one to advance on the Godward path. It is such practices that are termed as the rules of conduct laid down

for a 'Brahmachārī', and which form part of the obligatory duties attaching to the stage of Brahmacharya or student life, and must be followed by all practicants to the best of their ability and according to their own circumstances.

The basic principle of Brahmacharya is conservation and purification of the generative fluid. This greatly helps God-Realization through the eradication of desires. The semen of those who have taken a vow of perpetual celibacy and have turned its flow upwards does not take a downward course under any circumstance whatsoever; that is why they advance easily on the path leading to God-Realization. At a lower rung of the ladder stand those whose generative fluid does have a downward flow, but who manage to conserve it by wholly abstaining from sexual indulgence in thought, word and deed. This too is tantamount to Brahmacharya. With

reference to this latter the *Garuḍa-Purāṇa* says—

"Abstaining from sex-indulgence in thought, word and deed everywhere, at every time and under all circumstances is called Brahmacharya."†

The institution of Āśramas too has God-Realization for its object. Brahmacharya is the first of the four Āśramas. It is incumbent on those who belong to this Āśrama to observe the rules of Brahmacharya with scrupulous care. It is therefore that the Lord says, "Desirous of attaining Brahma the celibates practise Brahmacharya."

The Lord undertakes in this verse to tell Arjuna something about the supreme Brahma or Oversoul referred to above, viz., "who that Brahma is, and through what kind of practice followed at the time of death can one realize Him."‡

*The next two verses actually describe what the preceding verse promised to tell.*

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।  
मूर्ध्न्याधायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥ १२ ॥  
ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन् ।  
यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥ १३ ॥

सर्वद्वाराणि all the doors ( of the senses ); संयम्य having closed; च and; मनः the mind; हृदि within ( the cavity of ) the heart; निरुध्य firmly holding; प्राणम् the life-breath; मूर्ध्नि in the head; आधाय fixing; आत्मनः योगधारणाम् Yogic concentration on God; अस्थितः remaining steadfast in; यः who; ओम् OM ( the sacred Pranava or ever new appellation of God ); इति this; एकाक्षरम् ब्रह्म the one indestructible

\* Vide commentary on VI. 14.

† कर्मणा मनसा वाचा सर्वावस्थासु सर्वदा । सर्वत्र मैथुनत्यागो ब्रह्मचर्यं प्रचक्ष्यते ॥ (238. 6)

‡ The *Kaṭhopanishad* also contains a Mantra which is analogous to the above verse:—

सर्वे वेदा यत्पदमामनन्ति तपांसि सर्वाणि च यद्रदन्ति ।

यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण ब्रवीम्योमित्येतत् ॥ ( I. ii. 15 )

"I shall briefly tell you about the goal which all the Vedas proclaim, nay, which all austerities are declared as leading to, and seeking which celibates observe the vow of Brahmacharya, OM is the word for that state."

Brahma ( God ); व्याहरन् uttering; माम् Me ( the Absolute ); अनुसरन् meditating on; देहम् the body; त्यजन् leaving; प्रयाति departs ( from this world ); सः he; परमाम् गतिम् the highest goal; याति reaches.

Having closed all the doors of the senses, and firmly holding the mind in the cavity of the heart, and then fixing the life-breath in the head, and thus remaining steadfast in Yogic concentration on God, he who leaves the body and departs uttering the one indestructible Brahma, OM, and dwelling on Me in My absolute aspect, reaches the supreme goal. ( 12,13 )

The five senses of perception, viz., the sense of hearing etc., and the five organs of action, such as the organ of speech etc.—these are the ten media for contacting worldly objects; hence they are termed as doors. Besides these, the different centres in the body which are the seats of these senses and organs are also called doors. Withdrawing these from external objects, that is, suspending all their functions such as hearing etc., and at the same time controlling all their seats, the senses should be turned inwards. This is what is meant by closing the doors of the senses. The process is known as Pratyāhāra in the terminology of Yoga.

Situated between the navel and the throat, the heart has been compared to a lotus, and is supposed to be the seat of the mind and the vital airs. Emptied of all thoughts, the ever-wandering mind is confined within the region of the heart. The process is described in the verse as 'fixing the mind in the heart'.

After fixing the mind in the heart, the vital airs have to be raised upwards through an ascending nerve, and placed in the head. In course of this process the mind too follows the breath, and gets fixed in the head. This very process is termed in the Science of Yoga as 'Dhāraṇā'.

Restraining the senses as laid down above, and fixing the mind and the vital

airs firmly in the head is the same as remaining steadfast in Yogic concentration. The use of the word 'Ātmanah' before 'Yogadhāraṇām' is intended to convey that the mind has to be concentrated on God, and not on any other deity or Nature.

The word OM is an appellation of the indestructible supreme Reality or God, who is one without a second; and the name and the object named being recognized as essentially one, it is quite in the fitness of things to speak of OM as the 'one indestructible syllable' and also as Brahma ( vide X. 25 ). The *Kaṭhopanishad* also says:—

"This indestructible syllable is Brahma, this indestructible syllable is the supreme. Knowing this very syllable man is able to attain whatever he may like to have."\*

It may be asked here: How can it be possible for one to utter the word OM when all the senses, including the organ of speech as well as the mind have been restrained and the vital airs have been fixed in the head? Our answer to this is that the verse does not insist on vocal utterance. Utterance here means utterance by the mind.

As the verse refers to the last moments of the Yogi who follows the path of Knowledge, the word 'Mām' here stands for the absolute formless Brahma, the

\* एतद्व्येवाक्षरं ब्रह्म एतद्व्येवाक्षरं परम्। एतद्व्येवाक्षरं ज्ञात्वा यो यदिच्छति तस्य तत्॥

embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. Just as by declaring in verse 4 that He Himself is Adhiyajña in this body, the Lord has shown His identity with the Adhiyajña aspect of God, even so He has used the word 'Mām' in this context to bring out His identity with Brahma.

One should not wonder here how to carry on together the mental repetition of OM as well as meditation on Brahma, the meaning of OM. For it is certainly within the power of the mind to carry on both the practices together. It is a common experience that even though externally engaged in a particular activity, people are mentally busy with other thoughts as well besides those pertaining to the work in hand. There are very few people who when externally engaged in a particular action uninterruptedly think of nothing else than the action itself. Nay, often it so happens that though externally speaking or doing one thing man is revolving just the opposite thing in his mind side by side with the thought of his external occupation. When one experiences no difficulty in this, why should there be any difficulty in carrying on in a lonely place mental repetition of the appellation of God, viz., OM, side by side with meditation on God Himself? Mental repetition of the Name should, on the other hand, prove helpful in fixing one's thought on the object named. The great sage Patañjali too says that till the stage of what is called Savikalpa Samādhi the distinction of word, its meaning and the consciousness of its meaning persists in the mind (vide *Yoga-Sūtras* I. 41). Hence it is but natural that a thought of the name of the object meditated upon should exist in the mind side by side with that of the object itself. Patañjali says:—"The sacred syllable OM (also called Praṇava) is the name of God. Repetition of this Name

and meditation on the object signified by it, viz., God should be carried on together." (तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः । तज्जपस्तदर्थमावनम् । *Ibid.*, I. 27-28).

Realization of the absolute, formless Brahma as identical with oneself is what is meant by 'reaching the supreme goal' in this verse. Lasting freedom from the cycle of births and deaths, attainment of liberation or Mokṣa and realization of 'Nirvāṇa Brahma' are only different names for this supreme state.

In verses 8 to 10 above the object of worship, viz., the supreme Puruṣa, has been described as omniscient, the ruler and sustainer of all, and self-luminous like the sun. All these are divine attributes of the all-pervading God. Verses 11 to 13, however, mention no such attribute as may present any difficulty in treating them as dealing with the absolute, formless Brahma. Moreover, in the former verses the worshipper has been characterized as 'full of devotion', which indicates that the mode of worship referred to therein is the one in which the worshipper and the object of worship are held as different, and realization of the supreme divine Puruṣa or God with attributes has been declared to be the reward of his worship. In these verses, however, the subject of discussion being the mode of worship in which the worshipper and the worshipped are one, no such qualification has been used with reference to the worshipper, and attainment of the supreme goal (absolute Brahma) has been declared to be the fruit of his worship. Over and above this, verse 11 also undertakes to broach a new subject. At the same time, if all the six verses are treated as dealing with one subject, the references to Yoga contained in them should have to be regarded as suffering from the defect of repetition. All these arguments seem to establish conclusively that the six verses referred to above deal with two subjects and not one.

*The modes of practice followed at the hour of death by the Yogis who worship the formless God with attributes and the absolute formless Brahma respectively have been thus described with their fruits; but such practice during*

*the last moments can be followed only by those who have brought their mind under control through previous practice of Yoga. For an ordinary man it is most difficult to fix the mind as laid down above at the last moment either on the unmanifest Divinity with attributes, or on the absolute formless Brahma. Under such circumstances one is naturally led to enquire an easy way to God-Realization. To this the Lord now replies that constant and uninterrupted thought of God is an easy way to His realization.*

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।

तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥ १४ ॥

पार्थ O son of Prthā ( Kuntī ), Arjuna; यः who; अनन्यचेताः not thinking of any-one else; नित्यशः always; सततम् continuously; माम् Me ( the supreme Person ); स्मरति thinks of; नित्ययुक्तस्य ever absorbed in Me; तस्य योगिनः to that Yogi; अहम् I ( am ); सुलभः easily attainable.

Arjuna, whosoever always and constantly thinks of Me with undivided mind, to that Yogi ever absorbed in Me I am easily attainable. ( 14 )

He whose mind having lost all attraction for everything else remains constantly and lovingly attached to God alone, who is the repository of supreme Love, is one who is said to be possessed of 'an undivided mind'. The word 'Satatam' indicates that remembrance of God should go on uninterruptedly without even a moment's break; and the word 'Nityaśah' shows that such uninterrupted remembrance should be carried on throughout one's life without a day's respite.

The verse speaks of constant remembrance of God with a heart full of love, and contains expressions like 'I' and 'he', which are indicative of distinction between the worshipper and the object of worship. Therefore, the word 'Mām' or 'Me' used in it stands for Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person, who is an embodiment of Divinity with attributes. And even so remembrance here consists in constantly and repeatedly dwelling on a mental image of His divine form or on His divine names, virtues, glory and sports etc.

When the love-intoxicated devotees

who remembers the Lord with exclusive devotion can no longer bear his separation from Him, the Lord too begins to feel His separation from the devotee unbearable. For His vow is: "However men approach Me, even so do I seek them." ( IV.11. ) And when God Himself longs to meet the devotee, who can stand in His way ? That is why the verse says that God is easily attainable by such a devotee.

But the question is, 'Is it an easy thing to be in constant thought of the Lord at all times ?' Our answer to this question is that for one who is possessed of reverence and love for God and the God-realized saints, and who firmly believes that by constantly remembering God at all times one can easily attain Him, it is no doubt easy to be in constant thought of the Lord through His grace. But it is certainly difficult for one who lacks faith and love, who has no knowledge of God's virtues and glory, and who does not enjoy the privilege of being in touch with a God-realized saint.

# Kalyana-Kalpataru

Reward of Exclusive Thought



“Arjuna, whosoever always and constantly thinks of Me with undivided mind, to that Yogī ever absorbed in Me I am easily attainable.”

( VIII. 14. )

*By declaring in the next verse that God-realized souls are never born again, the Lord now reveals that a God-realized saint is never disunited from God.*

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम् ।

नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥ १५ ॥

परमाम् संसिद्धिम् the highest perfection; गताः having attained; महात्मानः great souls; माम् Me; उपेत्य having come to; दुःखालयम् the abode of sorrow; अशाश्वतम् transitory; पुनर्जन्म rebirth; न not; नाप्नुवन्ति are subjected to.

Great souls, who have attained the highest perfection, having come to Me, are no more subjected to rebirth, which is the abode of sorrow, and transient by nature. (15)

Through constant practice of adoration and meditation carried on with utmost faith and love when the practicant reaches the climax of Sādhana, after attaining which no Sādhana remains to be done, and the practicant immediately obtains direct perception of God, he is said to have reached the 'highest perfection.' And the term 'Mahātmānah' (great souls) has been used with reference to those enlightened devotees who have reached this state of perfection.

The transmigration of an individual soul from one species of life to another, under the impulse of Karma, cannot cease till he has attained God. This transmigration of a soul under the impulse of Karma is called rebirth. And there is no species of life whatsoever which is not full of sorrow and transient. Death itself is a proof positive of the transitoriness of life; but even of such objects with which we come in contact during our life, there is none which ever remains the same, and contact with which may last for ever. That which appears agreeable today becomes disagreeable tomorrow when its present form undergoes some change, or when our mental attitude towards the same is changed. Even that which man regards as positively conducive to happiness in life becomes a source of

sorrow when either it ceases to be, or when he himself is forced to part with it. Besides this, the sense of imperfection attaching to all objects and states of existence and the fear of destruction attending upon them all is a perennial source of pain. Sins committed through attachment in the course of accumulation and enjoyment of objects which appear delightful also lead to various forms of suffering and tortures in hell. Rebirth being thus full of sorrow and sorrow alone from the time of entering the womb till death, it has been characterized as the abode of sorrow; and contact with the various species of life and the enjoyments obtained therein being transient, it has been further described as transitory by nature.

The great souls referred to above are no more subjected to rebirth only because those devotees, possessed of exclusive love for God, succeed in realizing Him. The rule is that he who is once able to realize God, who is an endless ocean of all joys and the supreme support and asylum of all, and who is also called the Supreme Spirit or the Supreme Person, is never and under no circumstance disunited from Him. That is why the Lord says that after God-Realization one is no more subjected to rebirth.



*The statement that great souls who have realized God are never reborn indicates that other souls are subject to rebirth. Therefore, one is naturally tempted to enquire up to what limit Jivas are compelled to return even after reaching it. In reply to this, the Lord says:—*

आब्रह्मभुवनालोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।  
मासुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥ १६ ॥

अर्जुन O Arjuna; आब्रह्मभुवनात् from the heavenly realm of Brahmā ( the Creator ) downwards; लोकाः ( all ) the worlds; पुनरावर्तिनः ( are ) liable to appear and reappear; तु but; कौन्तेय O son of Kunti; माम् Me; उपेत्य reaching; पुनर्जन्म re-birth; न not; विद्यते there is.

Arjuna, all the worlds from Brahmāloka ( the heavenly realm of the Creator, Brahmā ) downwards are liable to appear and reappear. But, O son of Kunti, on attaining Me there is no rebirth. ( For while I am beyond Time, regions like Brahmāloka, being conditioned by time, are transitory. ) ( 16 )

Brahmā is the name of the four-faced deity who taking his birth from the lotus in the navel of God at the beginning of creation brings forth the entire universe. He is known as Prajāpati, Hiranyagarbha and Sūtrātmā as well. It is he who has been referred to as the 'Adhidaiva' in verse 4 of this chapter. The heavenly region where he has his abode and which forms the uppermost limit of this material universe is known as the 'Brahmaloka' or 'Brahmabhuvana'. The word 'Lokāḥ'

covers all the divisions of the universe, higher as well as lower, such as Bhūḥ, Bhuvaḥ, Swaḥ, Atala, Vitala and so on, which are presided over by so many celestial regents or guardians known as Lokapālas.

Worlds which are by their very nature liable to disappear with the dissolution of the universe and to appear again at the beginning of every creation, and the inhabitants of which are subject to rebirth, are called 'Punarāvartinaḥ'.

*The statement that all the worlds from Brahmāloka downwards are liable to appear and disappear raises the question: What is it that renders them liable to appearance and disappearance? Anticipating this question the Lord now proceeds to establish the transitory nature of all the worlds by stating the duration of Brahmā's day and night.*

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्यद् ब्रह्मणो विदुः ।  
रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥ १७ ॥

ब्रह्मणः of Brahmā ( the Creator ); यद् ( that ) which; अहः ( is ) the day; सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तम् as covering a thousand Mahāyugas; रात्रिम् ( and so his ) night; युगसहस्रान्ताम् as extending to a thousand Mahāyugas; विदुः ( who ) know

( from realization ); ते जनाः those Yogis; अहोरात्रविदः ( are ) knowers of ( the reality about ) Time.

Those Yogis who know from realization Brahmā's day as covering a thousand Mahāyugas, and so his night as extending to another thousand Mahāyugas, know the reality about Time. ( 17 )

The word 'Yuga' in this verse stands for a 'celestial Yuga', which consists of one set of the four earthly Yugas, viz., Satyayuga, Tretā, Dwāpara and Kali. The measure of time of the celestials is reckoned as 360 times longer than the measure obtaining on the earth. In other words, a day and night of twenty-four hours of the celestials is equivalent to one terrestrial year; one celestial month consists of thirty earthly months, and three hundred and sixty earthly years constitute one celestial year. Twelve thousand such celestial years go to form a 'celestial Yuga'. It is also called a 'Mahāyuga' or 'Chaturyugi', which consists of  $12000 \times 360$  or 43,20,000 human years. According to the celestial measure, every Kaliyuga extends to twelve hundred years, every Dwāpara consists of two thousand four hundred years, each Tretā lasts for three thousand six hundred years, and each Satyayuga runs for four thousand eight hundred years. The aggregate of these four Yugas comes to 12,000 years. This constitutes a celestial Yuga. Thousand such celestial Yugas go to make a day of Brahmā, and the same number of Yugas constitute his night. Reckoned in human years the duration of the different Yugas is as follows:—

Kaliyuga— $1200 \times 360$  or 4,32,000 years  
 Dwāpara— $2400 \times 360$  or 8,64,000 years  
 ( Twice as much as Kaliyuga )  
 Tretā— $3600 \times 360$  or 12,96,000 years  
 ( Three times as much as Kaliyuga )  
 Satyayuga— $4800 \times 360$  or 17,28,000 years  
 ( Four times as much as Kaliyuga )  
 Total— $12000 \times 360$  or 43,20,000 years.

The above figure represents one celestial Yuga. Thousand such celestial

Yugas or 4,32,00,00,000 human years go to make a day of Brahmā, and his night also is of the same length. The subject has been fully dealt with in verses 64 to 73 of Chapter I of *Manusmṛiti* ( the Code of Manu ). The day of Brahmā is known as a 'Kalpa' ( cycle ) or 'Sarga' ( the period of creation ) and the night as 'Pralaya' or dissolution. Thirty rounds of such days and nights taken together make one Brahmīc month, twelve such months make one Brahmīc year, and hundred such years constitute the span of Brahmā's life. By stating the duration of Brahmā's day and night the Lord indicates that even Brahmā's life and abode are thus finite and limited by time; hence they are also transient. When such is the case with the life and abode of Brahmā, there is no wonder that the worlds lower than the Brahmāloka and the bodies of beings inhabiting them should be transient.

Having come to know the duration of Brahmā's day and night, man becomes cognizant of the transitory character of Brahmāloka as well as of all the worlds enclosed within its circle. He then comes to realize that when the worlds themselves are transitory, the enjoyments obtained therein should be much more fleeting and perishable. And that which is transitory and perishable can never bring lasting happiness. Therefore, it is the height of folly to get attached to enjoyments of this world and the next and strive to obtain them, and to fritter away the human existence by indulging in frivolities. The span of a man's life is very short. Therefore wisdom lies in devoting oneself to the remembrance of God with a heart full of love, and realiz-

ing Him at the earliest moment, wherein truth about Time in the form of day and night, and makes the best use of his time alone who realizes this knows the valuable time.

*Showing thus the length of Brahmā's day and night, the Lord now tells us of the repeated appearance of all embodied beings at the coming of each such day and of their dissolution at each such nightfall, thereby revealing their transitory character.*

अव्यक्ताद्व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे ।

रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके ॥ १८ ॥

सर्वाः all; व्यक्तयः embodied beings (both sentient and insentient); अहरागमे at the coming of the cosmic day; अव्यक्तात् from the Unmanifest (i. e., Brahmā's subtle body); प्रभवन्ति emanate; रात्र्यागमे (and) at the cosmic nightfall; तत्र अव्यक्तसंज्ञके into that subtle body of Brahmā, known as the Unmanifest; एव alone; प्रलीयन्ते merge.

All embodied beings emanate from the Unmanifest (i. e., Brahmā's subtle body) at the coming of the cosmic day; at the cosmic nightfall they merge into the same subtle body of Brahmā, known as the Unmanifest. (18)

The word 'Vyakti' stands for that which is perceived by the mind and senses. All embodied beings can be so perceived. Therefore, the word 'Vyaktayah' qualified by the adjective 'Sarvāḥ' denotes all embodied beings that are manifest, no matter whether they are gods, human beings, manes, beasts, birds or any other creatures.

The word 'Avyakta' (Unmanifest) here refers to the lower Prakṛti of God in its subtle state, also known as the subtle body of Brahmā, that is the state anterior to the evolution of the five gross elements.

At the commencement of Brahmā's day, that is to say, when Brahmā emerges from the state of deep sleep and enters the waking life, there appears a change in the subtle state of Prakṛti, which assumes a gross form, and all embodied beings become connected in different ways with that gross form of Prakṛti according to their respective Karma. This is what

has been spoken of in this verse as the emanation of all embodied beings from the Unmanifest.

At the end of a thousand celestial Yugas, when Brahmā passes from the awakened state to a state of deep sleep, that marks the commencement of the cosmic night. At that time Prakṛti gives up its gross form and reverts to the subtle state and all embodied beings, being deprived of their gross bodies, get embedded into the subtle state of Prakṛti. This is what is meant by the merging of all embodied beings in the subtle body of Brahmā, known as the Unmanifest. The soul itself, being unborn and imperishable, does not in reality go through the process of emanation and dissolution. Therefore, the emanation of beings in this context should be construed to mean the crystallization of the subtle element of Prakṛti, connected with the beings rooted in Prakṛti, into the gross form; and their dissolution should be taken to mean the melting of the gross forms back into the subtle state,

The 'Unmanifest' referred to in this verse as the subtle state of Prakṛti or Matter is essentially the same as the Prakṛti mentioned in verses 7 and 8 of Chapter IX. Only they represent two different phases of the same substance. In other words, the 'Unmanifest' mentioned in this verse stands for the 'Aparā' or lower Prakṛti which has been shown

in VII. 4 as eightfold divided. Verses 7 and 8 of Chapter IX, on the other hand, speak of Prakṛti or Matter in its primordial and indescribable state prior to its division into eight forms. The same primordial Prakṛti, when it passes from the causal to the subtle state, comes to be known as the 'Aparā' or lower Prakṛti with its eight divisions.

*Even though at the commencement of Brahmā's night all beings get dissolved into the Unmanifest, they do not attain immunity from rebirth till they succeed in realising God, and continue to revolve in the whirligig of births and deaths. In order to show this, the Lord says:—*

भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।

रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे ॥ १९ ॥

पार्थ O son of Prthā ( Kuntī ), Arjuna; सः एव अयम् this selfsame; भूतग्रामः multitude of beings; भूत्वा भूत्वा emanating again and again; अवशः under compulsion of its nature; रात्र्यागमे at the coming of the cosmic night; प्रलीयते is dissolved; अहरागमे ( and ) at the commencement of the cosmic day; प्रभवति rises ( again ).

Arjuna, this multitude of beings, being born again and again, is dissolved under compulsion of its nature at the coming of the cosmic night, and rises again at the commencement of the cosmic day. ( 19 )

The word 'Bhūtagrāmaḥ' in this verse stands for living beings in general including both sentient and insentient creatures. The qualifying words 'Sah', 'Eva' and 'Ayam' used with reference to the same show that the selfsame beings who merge in the Unmanifest at the cosmic nightfall, and who have been referred to in the preceding verse as 'Sarvāḥ Vyaktayah', rise again at the cosmic dawn. Their merging into the Unmanifest neither brings them liberation nor does it bring about the cessation of their separate existence. That is why immediately the period of the cosmic night ends they all manifest themselves, obtaining physical bodies suited to their respective qualities and Karmas. The Lord says that the multitude of beings, both sentient and

insentient, which thus repeatedly merges into the Unmanifest and then emanates from it again and again, and which is directly visible to us is ever the same; it has not newly appeared.

By using the word 'Bhūtvā' twice in the verse, the Lord shows that the processes of emanation of beings from the Unmanifest and their merging into the same have gone on repeatedly from time without beginning. Even on the completion of Brahmā's life of a hundred years reckoned according to his measure, when the gross body of Brahmā too gets dissolved into primordial Prakṛti, and along with him all embodied beings also merge into the same, this circuit of their appearance and disappearance does

not come to an end. They continue to appear and disappear even after that (IX. 8). So long as an embodied being does not realize God, he will thus continue to emanate from Prakṛti and merge into her again and again.

The adjective 'Avaśaḥ' qualifies 'Bhūtagrāmaḥ'. He who is subject to another, and is not free, is said to be 'Avaśaḥ'. All embodied beings emanating from the Unmanifest and again merging into the Unmanifest are subject to their own individual nature, which is a product of their respective traits and Karmas existing from time without beginning. Being subject to such nature, each being is compelled to undergo repeated births and deaths. That is why in XIII. 21 the Lord says that it is the soul bound by Prakṛti who enjoys the Guṇas born of Prakṛti in the form of pleasure and pain, and that it is his association with Prakṛti which is responsible for his birth in higher and lower species. This makes it clear that the soul who reaching beyond the realm of Prakṛti succeeds in realizing God does not take birth again.

It may be asked here: Who is it that ordains with due precision and care the repeated birth of all embodied beings according to their respective traits and Karma: is it Prakṛti, God Himself or Brahmā (the Creator)? Our answer to this question is that there being reference to the day and night of Brahmā in this as well as in the preceding verses, it is to be understood that it is Brahmā himself who brings forth beings again and again clothing them with forms appropriate to their respective traits and Karmas. At the end of the final dissolution, when Brahmā has not yet come into being, the act of creation is done by God Himself; but after the birth of a new Brahmā, the function of creation is carried on by him alone.

The process of creation described in verses 7 to 10 of Chapter IX and again in verses 3 to 4 of Chapter XIV has reference to the very first creation after the Final Dissolution, whereas the process described in these verses refers to the creation at the commencement of a day of Brahmā and on the termination of a Brahmīc night.

*The question now is: Is this Unmanifest, to which all beings return at the commencement of a Brahmīc night, and from which again they emanate at the beginning of a Brahmīc day, the highest truth or state? Or is there anything higher than this? In reply to this possible query, the Lord says:—*

परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः ।

यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ॥ २० ॥

तस्मात् अव्यक्तात् than this Unmanifest; तु even; परः much higher; अन्यः yet another (of a heterogeneous character); यः which; सनातनः eternal; अव्यक्तः भावः unmanifest Existence (there is); सः that (supreme divine Person); सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु with the destruction of all beings; न not; विनश्यति perishes.

Far beyond even this Unmanifest, there is yet another unmanifest Existence, that Supreme Divine Person, who does not perish even though all beings perish. ( 20 )

The word 'Avyaktāt' taken together with the demonstrative adjective 'Tasmāt', in this verse, refers to the Unmanifest mentioned in verse 18 above, in which all embodied beings merge during a Brahmīc night. Another unmanifest Existence or

Substance, distinct from this, is the one spoken of in verse 4 of this chapter as 'Adhiyajña', in verse 9 as the 'all-wise eternal Being' etc., in verse 10 as the supreme Divine Person, in verse 22 as the 'Supreme Person', and in IX. 4 as the 'Unmanifest aspect' of God. By calling this latter as 'higher' than and 'different' from the former, the Lord establishes its decided superiority to and diversity from the former Unmanifest. That is to say, though both these substances are 'unmanifest', they are not of the same class or category. While the former is insentient, perishable and objective, this latter 'Unmanifest' is the sentient, imperishable subject. Besides, the latter Unmanifest is the Lord, Controller and Supervisor of the former, and therefore much superior to, and altogether different from the same. It has been called 'eternal' inasmuch as it has no beginning or end.

'All beings' in this verse stands for the whole multitude of embodied beings, both sentient and insentient, who appear during Brahmā's day and disappear during his night, including their mind, senses, bodies, objects of enjoyment and abodes, etc. The absorption of these beings, divested of their gross and subtle bodies, into the primordial Prakṛti, or undifferentiated Māyā, during the Final Dissolution is what has been spoken of here as their destruction. Even at that time the supreme Divine Puruṣa or God, who is the supervisor of that Prakṛti, and has been referred to here as the eternal Unmanifest, exists in His own glory, absorbing within Himself all those beings together with Prakṛti itself. This is what is meant by the statement that "this eternal Unmanifest does not perish, even though all beings perish."

*Verses 8 and 10 declare realization of the supreme Divine Puruṣa as the fruit of worship of the Adhiyajña aspect of God; verse 13 similarly pronounces attainment of the supreme goal as the reward of worship of the supreme indestructible Absolute; whereas verse 14 holds out God-Realization as the boon obtainable from the worship of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa or God with form and attributes. In order that the above three states of realization may not be misconstrued as distinct from one another, the Lord while declaring their oneness shows that after their realization there is no rebirth.*

अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम् ।

यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥ २१ ॥

अव्यक्तः the Unmanifest (which); अक्षरः इति as the Indestructible; उक्तः has been spoken of; तम् that; परमाम् गतिम् the Supreme Goal; आहुः (they) call; यम् (and) which (eternal Unmanifest); प्राप्य attaining; न not; निवर्तन्ते they return (to this mortal world); तद् that (is); मम My; परमम् supreme; धाम Abode or State.

The same Unmanifest which has been spoken of as the Indestructible is also called the supreme Goal; that again is My supreme Abode, attaining which they return not to this mortal world. (21)

The words 'Unmanifest' and 'Indestructible', in this verse, stand for the same 'Adhiyajña' who has been referred to as the 'eternal Unmanifest' in the

preceding verse, and as the 'supreme Divine Puruṣa' in verse 10 of this chapter.

The words 'supreme Goal' denote the state of liberation or final beatitude, which is the highest object worth attaining, the attainment of which leaves nothing to be attained, and which brings the total cessation of all forms of suffering as soon as it is attained. Therefore, 'supreme Goal' stands here for the absolute formless Divinity, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, who is spoken of as the 'supreme Indestructible'. ( cf. VIII. 13 ).

The eternal Abode of God, being all truth, all knowledge and all bliss, and also divine and sentient in character, is

in reality identical with God. Therefore, the 'supreme Abode' mentioned in this verse stands for the Lord's eternal Abode, His very being and His divine state. That is to say, there is no difference in reality between the attainment of the eternal Abode of God, of the divine state and of God Himself. Similarly, there is no real difference between the attainment of the indestructible Unmanifest, of the supreme Goal and of God. Diversity of fruit exists only in the eyes of the practicers following different courses of discipline. It is therefore that the fruit has been called by different names. There being no essential difference between the various fruits, they have been shown as identical in the present verse.

*Showing thus the identity of the eternal Unmanifest with the supreme Goal and the supreme Abode, the Lord now proceeds to tell us the means of attaining that eternal unmanifest supreme Puruṣa.*

पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया ।

यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ॥ २२ ॥

पार्थ O son of Prithā ( Kuntī ), Arjuna; यस्य अन्तःस्थानि residing in whom; भूतानि ( are all ) beings; येन ( and ) by whom; इदम् सर्वम् all this; ततम् ( is ) pervaded; सः that; परः पुरुषः ( eternal unmanifest ) supreme Puruṣa; तु indeed; अनन्यया भक्त्या ( only ) through exclusive Devotion; लभ्यः ( is ) attainable.

Arjuna, that eternal unmanifest supreme Puruṣa in whom all beings reside, and by whom all this is pervaded, is attainable only through exclusive Devotion.

( 22 )

Just as the four elements of air, fire, water and earth are part and parcel of ether, which is their sole cause and substratum, even so the entire creation consisting of sentient and insentient beings is part and parcel of God, has emanated from God and on God alone does it rest. This is what is meant by the statement that all beings reside in the supreme Puruṣa. Similarly, the statement that 'all this is pervaded by the supreme Puruṣa' should be understood to mean that just

as air, fire, water and earth are all pervaded by ether, even so the entire creation is pervaded by God. This very idea has been elaborated in verses 4, 5 and 6 of Chapter IX.

The 'supreme Puruṣa' mentioned in this verse stands for the all-pervading 'Adhiyajña' aspect of God. The formless God with attributes, whose worship has been discussed in verses 8, 9 and 10 of this chapter, and the eternal Unmanifest

referred to in verse 20 are just the same as this 'Adhiyajña'. It is in this aspect of God that all beings are said to reside, and it is by Him alone that all beings are spoken of as pervaded.

Although the worship of this unmanifest Puruṣa has already been discussed in verses 8 to 10 above, it will be seen that there is some difference between the subject matter of those verses and that of the present verse. Whereas the above verses merely deal with the practice attained by Yogis at the hour of death with its reward, the present verse speaks of exclusive devotion which can be practised at all times by all kinds of people, and of the realization of God through such practice. It is in order to deal with

this latter aspect of devotion that the subject of that worship has been taken up again for discussion in the present verse.

Exclusive devotion consists in surrendering everything to the almighty God, who sustains all and is the inner witness of all, remaining supremely contented at all times with His dispensation, and constantly thinking of Him with undivided love in every way. Realizing the virtues, nature and essence of God through such exclusive Devotion, the practisant gets absorbed in the object of his worship and speedily attains the object of his existence by directly perceiving Him. This is what is meant by realizing God through exclusive devotion.

*In the course of His answer to the seventh question of Arjuna, the Lord clearly explained how man realizes God at the last moment of his life. Incidentally He also mentioned that without God-Realization there is no escape for the Jīva from the round of births and deaths even though he may ascend even up to Brahmāloka. But with regard to those who reach the state from which there is no return, the Lord did not mention in that connection as to how and by which path they go. Even so with regard to those who pass on to a state from which they have to return, the route by which they travel was not mentioned. The Lord, therefore, now introduces the two paths in the next verse.*

यत्र काले त्वनावृत्तिमावृत्तिं चैव योगिनः ।

प्रयाता यान्ति तं कालं वक्ष्यामि भरतर्षभ ॥ २३ ॥

तु and; भरतर्षभ O best of Bharatas, Arjuna; यत्र काले at which time; प्रयाताः having departed (from this world); योगिनः the Yogis; अनावृत्तिम् the state of non-return; च and; आवृत्तिम् the state from which they have to return; एव alone; यान्ति attain; तम् कालम् that time, i. e., the two respective paths; वक्ष्यामि I shall describe.

Arjuna, I shall now tell you the time (path) departing when Yogis do not return, and also the time (path) departing when they do return. ( 23 )

The word 'Kāla' (time) here stands for the path on which the deities presiding over the different periods of time exercise their authority within their respective limits. That which has been spoken of as 'Kāla' in this verse has been referred to as the 'bright' and the 'dark' paths in the twenty-sixth, and as



the two Srtis (paths) in verse 27. Besides, the words 'Agniḥ', 'Jyotiḥ' and 'Dhūmah' too do not represent divisions of time. Therefore, it will not be correct to interpret the word 'Tatra', appearing in verses 24 and 25, as referring to 'time' and it is quite in order to construe 'Kāla' in the sense of a path falling within the jurisdiction of the deities presiding over the different periods of time.

Here it may be asked: When such is the case, why do people consider it auspicious for the deceased if one dies during the bright fortnight and when the sun takes a northerly course? Our answer to this question is that in a sense the popular belief referred to above is also correct; for death during those periods brings the soul immediately in contact with the deities presiding over them. Therefore, a soul departing from this world during those periods reaches his destination easily and quickly. But this should not lead one to conclude that an individual departing at night, or during the dark fortnight, or when the sun takes a southerly course, does not proceed along the bright path or Archirmārga as it is called in the Upaniṣads. In this connection it should be understood that a departing soul will take that very path by which he is to travel, irrespective of the time of death. Of course, it is true that if a soul qualified to traverse the bright path dies during the night, his contact with the deity presiding over the day-time will be established only at daybreak, and meanwhile he will remain in the charge of the resplendent fire-god. Even so, if he dies during the dark

fortnight, his contact with the deity presiding over the bright fortnight will be established only when the bright fortnight commences, and till then he will remain in the charge of the deity presiding over the day-time. In the same way, if he departs during the southerly course of the sun, his contact with the deity presiding over the northerly course will be established when the sun actually takes a northerly direction, and in the meantime he will remain in the charge of the deity presiding over the bright fortnight. *Mutatis-mutandis* the same rule applies in the case of those who are qualified to travel by the southern path.

The use of the word 'Yogināḥ' (Yogis) in this verse shows that it does not speak of the transmigration of ordinary mortals who migrate from one species to another in this very world or proceed to hell. The description, contained in this as well as in the following verses, of the 'bright' and the 'dark' paths is a description of the migration of only superior types of men who are devoted to worship of God, or to such noble pursuits as the performance of sacrifices, charity and austerity etc.

The prefix 'Pra' before 'yātāḥ' is intended to indicate the departure of souls proceeding to the higher worlds. By using the word 'Vakṣyāmi' the Lord undertakes to reveal to Arjuna the difference between the two paths, one leading to the regions from which one has to return and the other leading to a state of non-return, the names by which the two paths are known, and the deities who preside over them.

*Of the two paths which the foregoing verse undertook to describe, the Lord now proceeds to speak of the one leading to the state from which there is no return.*

अग्निर्ज्योतिरहः शुक्लः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम् ।

तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः ॥ २४ ॥

ज्योतिः अग्निः the fire-god, who is all-effulgence; अहः the deity presiding over daylight; शुक्लः the deity presiding over the bright fortnight; षण्मासाः उत्तरायणम्

the deity presiding over the six months of the northward course of the sun; तत्र by that path ( which is presided over by all the aforesaid deities ); प्रयाताः departed; ब्रह्मविद्ः जनाः the Yogis who have known Brahma; ब्रह्म God; गच्छन्ति reach.

( Of the two paths ) the one is that in which are stationed the all-  
effulgent fire-god and the deities presiding over daylight, the bright fortnight,  
and the six months of the northward course of the sun respectively; pro-  
ceeding along it after death Yogis, who have known Brahma, being successively  
led by the above gods, finally reach Brahma. ( 24 )

The word 'Jyotiḥ' (effulgence) is a qualification of 'Agniḥ', which stands for the god of fire. The Upaniṣads speak of this god by the name of 'Archih', which is a synonym of 'Jyotiḥ'. The god of fire is all effulgence of an ethereal character; his jurisdiction extends over the whole terrestrial globe including the ocean, and his function is to bring the soul qualified to travel by the path following the northerly course of the sun in contact with the deity presiding over daylight. If such a soul dies during the hours of the night, this god keeps him in his charge overnight and hands him over after sunrise to the deity presiding over daylight. And if such a worshipper dies during the day, he immediately hands over the departing soul to the god of daylight.

The word 'Ahaḥ' stands for the deity presiding over daylight, whose form is much brighter than that of the fire-god. He has jurisdiction over the entire range of what is known as the Bhūloka including the atmospheric region, and his function is to establish contact between the soul who travels by the path following the northerly course of the sun and the deity presiding over the bright fortnight. That is to say, if a practicant dies during the dark fortnight, he has to remain under the care of the god of daylight till the arrival of the bright fortnight, when he is handed over to the deity presiding over the same. And if he dies during

the bright fortnight, the god of daylight immediately takes the practicant to the furthest limit of his own jurisdiction and hands him over to the deity presiding over the bright fortnight.

The word 'Śuklaḥ' stands for the deity presiding over the bright fortnight. His form is even more resplendent than that of the god of daylight. His jurisdiction extends even beyond the sphere of the earth, and covers the entire region lying between the earth and heaven, in which the sun shines for a whole human fortnight and nights are also of the same length. His function is to take the practicant travelling by the path which follows the northerly course of the sun to the very limit of his jurisdiction and hand him over to the deity presiding over the northerly course of the sun. If a practicant dies during the southerly course of the sun, this deity too, like the other deities mentioned above, takes care of the former till the sun turns towards the north; and if a soul departs during the northerly course, he immediately hands over the latter to the deity presiding over the northerly course of the sun.

The six months of the year, when the sun moves in a northerly direction, are called 'Uttarāyaṇa' or the northward course of the sun. The words 'Ṣaṁmāsāḥ Uttarāyaṇam' in the verse refer to the deity presiding over this northward course

of the sun. His form is even more resplendent than that of the deity of the bright fortnight. His jurisdiction extends even beyond the intermediate region to those heavenly regions where the sun shines for as many as six months of the human calendar, and the nights too are of the same length. His function is to take the departing soul who travels by the path following the northerly course of the sun to the furthest limit of his jurisdiction and hand him over to the deity presiding over the year, as described in the Upaniṣads ( vide *Chhāṇḍ. Up.* IV. xv. 5; V. x. 1, 2; *Br. Up.* VI. ii. 15 ). The god of the year then takes the soul to the abode of the sun-god, from where the latter takes him to the moon-god and the moon-god to the god of lightning in the latter's abode. Attendants of the supreme Lord then arrive there from His abode and take the practicant to that region, where at last he is brought face to face with God. It should be remembered here that the word 'Chandra' ( moon ) figuring in this description does not refer to the planet which moves round the earth, or to the deity presiding over the same.

The word 'Brahmavidāḥ' in this context stands for worshippers who have obtained, through the scriptures and the teachings

of preceptors, indirect knowledge of the truth about Brahma without attributes, or of the virtues, glory, reality and essence of God with attributes, as well as for the Karmayogi devoted to disinterested action. It does not refer to the illumined saints who have already realized God; for in the case of these latter migration after death from one place to another does not stand to reason. The Śruti also says: "His life-breath does not leave the body" (*Br. Up.* ); "It gets dissolved in the body itself" (*Ibid.*, III. ii. 11 ); "Becoming Brahma Itself, he realizes Brahma." (*IV.* iv. 6 ).\* The devotee who has realized God with attributes may either ascend to the supreme Abode of God along the path described above or may lose his identity in the very being of God according to his choice.

The word 'Brahma' here stands for God with attributes. Reaching Brahma means direct vision of God obtained after reaching the Lord's eternal indestructible Abode, which is variously known as Satyaloka or the supreme Abode, as Sāketa-loka, Goloka, or Vaikuṇṭhaloka, and even as Brahmaloaka. The reader should, however, note that this Brahmaloaka is not the same as mentioned in verse 16 of this chapter and characterized as subject to appearance and disappearance.

*Describing thus the path travelling by which one does not return, the Lord now speaks of the path going by which the practicant returns to this mortal world.*

धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः षण्मासा दक्षिणायनम् ।

तत्र चान्द्रमसं ज्योतिर्योगी प्राप्य निवर्तते ॥ २५ ॥

धूमः the deity presiding over smoke; रात्रिः the goddess presiding over the night-time; तथा even so; कृष्णः the deity presiding over the dark fortnight; षण्मासाः दक्षिणायनम् the deity presiding over the six months of the southward journey of the Sun; तत्र ( travelling ) by that path; योगी the practicant who performs actions with an interested motive; चान्द्रमसम् ज्योतिः the lustre of the moon; प्राप्य attaining; निवर्तते returns ( to this mortal world ).

\* न तस्य प्राणा शुक्लामन्ति । अत्रैव समवलीयन्ते । ब्रह्मैव सन् ब्रह्माप्येति ।

The other path is that wherein are stationed the gods presiding over smoke, night, the dark fortnight, and the six months of the southward course of the sun; the Yogi (devoted to action with an interested motive) taking to this path after death is led by the above gods, one after another, and attaining the lustre of the moon (and enjoying the fruit of his meritorious deeds in heaven) returns to this mortal world. (25)

The word 'Dhūmah' in this verse stands for the deity presiding over smoke, which is a symbol of darkness. The form of this deity is all darkness. Like the fire-god, he has his jurisdiction over the entire globe including the ocean. His function is to take practicants travelling by the path following the southward course of the sun to the goddess presiding over night. When a practicant of this class passes away during the day-time, he is taken care of by this deity during the day and at the commencement of the night handed over to the goddess of night.

The word 'Rātriḥ' should be similarly understood to mean the deity presiding over night. The form of this deity also is all darkness. Like the god of daylight, he has jurisdiction over the entire range of this planet including the atmospheric region. Of course, it should be borne in mind in this connection that the god of daylight exercises his authority over that part of the globe alone where there is daylight during a particular part of the day, while the goddess of night holds her sway over the other part where there is night. In this way the sphere of authority of these deities shifts according to the rotation of the earth round the sun in course of a day. The function of the goddess of night is to take the practicant departing by the path following the southward course of the sun beyond her jurisdiction to the intermediate region lying between the earth and heaven and hand him over to the deity presiding over the dark fortnight. If the practicant dies during the bright fortnight, he is kept by this deity in her own charge till the arrival of the

dark fortnight; and if he dies during the dark fortnight, he is immediately committed to the charge of the deity presiding over the same.

The word 'Kṛṣṇah' stands for the deity presiding over the dark fortnight. His form too is all darkness. His jurisdiction extends over the intermediate region lying between the earth and heaven, where the sun shines for a whole terrestrial fortnight, and nights too are of the same duration. His authority is, however, equally shared by the deity presiding over the bright fortnight, who holds his sway in that part of the intermediate region where the moon shines during a particular period of the month; whereas this deity exercises his authority over the other part where there is no moonlight during that part of the month. In this way the sphere of authority of these two deities as well shifts according to the revolution of the moon round our planet in course of a month. His function is to hand over the practicant departing by the path following the southward course of the sun to the deity presiding over this course. When a practicant of this class departs during the northward course of the sun, he is taken care of by this deity till the sun returns to the southward course; and if he dies during the southward course, he is immediately handed over to the deity presiding over the same.

The six months of the year, when the sun takes the southward course, are known as the 'Dakṣiṇāyana'. In the present context, however, the word stands for the deity who presides over this southward course. The form of this deity

too is all darkness. The jurisdiction of this deity extends over the celestial worlds beyond the intermediate region, where the sun shines for a period equivalent to six earthly months, and nights also are of the same length. His authority over these worlds is, however, equally shared by the deity presiding over the northern course of the sun, who holds his sway over those parts of the heavenly worlds where the sun shines during a particular part of the year; whereas the god of the southward course exercises his authority over the other parts where darkness prevails during that particular period. The sphere of authority of these two deities, therefore, shifts according to the revolution of the earth round the sun in course of a year. The function of this deity is to take the practicant proceeding to the heavenly regions by the path following the southward course of the sun beyond the limit of his jurisdiction, and hand him over to the deity presiding over the world of the Manes as described in the Upaniṣads. This latter deity hands him over to the deity presiding over the heavens, and this last deity takes him to the moon-world (*Chhān. Up. V. x. 4*). The moon-world here implies all the worlds up to Brahmaloṇa, which are subject to appearance and disappearance. The reader should, however, note that the world of the Manes, or Pitṛloṇa, as referred to in the Upaniṣads is not that Pitṛloṇa which is a part of the intermediate region, and where the sun shines for a full human fortnight and nights also are of the same length.

Men who perform meritorious deeds for obtaining the heaven-world etc. also exercise control over their senses. From this point of view, it is quite in order to call them Yogis. Besides, a man fallen from Yoga also ascends to heaven by this path and returns to this mortal plane after residing there for some time. Since he too belongs to the class of persons

who travel by this path, the use of the term 'Yogi' is quite appropriate in this case. By using the word 'Yogi' in this context the Lord further indicates that this path is not for men of a Tamasic disposition given to sinful pursuits, but for those who are entitled to the higher worlds by virtue of their devotion to duties enjoined by the scriptures (II. 42,43,44 and IX. 20,21 etc.).

The deity presiding over the moon-world possesses a form whose lustre is refreshingly cool. The word 'Jyotiḥ' here signifies an effulgent form resembling that of the moon-god; and he who attains such a form is said to have attained the lustre of the moon. This means that the practicant who ascends to the moon-world is endowed with a celestial form possessing a cool lustre and enjoys heavenly pleasures as a reward for his meritorious deeds. On the expiry, however, of the time-limit allotted for his residence there he has to return to this mortal world. This he is compelled to do when the stock of merits responsible for his residence there as well as for the enjoyment of heavenly pleasures gets exhausted through enjoyment. In course of his return journey to this terrestrial plane he assumes various shapes and forms. For instance he descends from the moon-world to ether. Lower down he assumes the form of air, and is then transformed into smoke. From the state of smoke he enters vapour; from vapour he takes the form of a cloud and from the cloud he comes down to the earth in the form of rain-drops and thereby enters the seeds of foodgrains like wheat, barley, rice, sesamum, beans etc., or other herbs and plants. Through them he gradually enters the semen of a male living being and in the process of his union with a female makes his way through semen-drops into the latter's womb. In this way he is reborn into a species determined by his previous Karmas (*Chhān. Up. V. x. 5,6,7*).

*Describing thus the two paths that follow the northward and southward*

*courses respectively of the sun, the Lord now proceeds to declare them as eternal and thus winds up the topic.*

शुक्लकृष्णे गती ह्येते जगतः शाश्वते मते ।

एकया यात्यनावृत्तिमन्ययाऽऽवर्तते पुनः ॥ २६ ॥

हि because; जगतः of the world; एते these two; शुक्लकृष्णे bright and dark ( otherwise known as Devayāna or the path of gods and Pitṛyāna or the path of Manes ); गती paths; शाश्वते ( as ) eternal; मते are considered; एकया ( proceeding ) by one of them; अनावृत्तिम् the supreme state from which there is no return; याति one reaches; अन्यया ( and proceeding ) by the other; पुनः आवर्तते one comes back ( to this mortal world ), i. e., becomes subject to birth and death once more.

For these two paths of the world, the bright and the dark, are considered to be eternal. Proceeding by one of them, one reaches the supreme state from which there is no return; and proceeding by the other, one returns to the mortal world, i. e., becomes subject to birth and death once more. ( 26 )

The word 'Jagataḥ' in this verse stands for the totality of living beings, both sentient and insentient, who live and move in the various regions of the universe, upper as well as lower; for all classes of beings can proceed by either of these two paths on obtaining the necessary qualification. Some time or other in course of his peregrination through the eight million odd species of life, God vouchsafes to every Jiva a golden opportunity to attain the celestial regions or enter His own supreme Abode by endowing him with a human body. If he makes the best use of his life on that occasion, he can certainly reach the destined goal by traversing any of these two paths. In this way both these paths have indirect relation with every living being. These two paths have existed for all beings from time without beginning, and will ever exist for them. It is for this reason that they have been called 'eternal'. Even though during the Final Dissolution, when all the worlds merge

in God, these two paths and the deities presiding over them also disappear in God, nevertheless they are created again, as of old, when there is a new creation. Therefore, there can be no objection to their being called eternal.

The path which leads to the supreme Abode of God is full of light and heavenly in character. The deities too presiding over this path are all effulgent, and the heart of those who travel by this path is also ever illumined by the light of wisdom. It is for these reasons that this path has been termed as the 'bright' path. On the other hand, the path which leads to the celestial regions including the Brahmāloka, or the abode of Brahmā, is dark when compared with the 'bright' path; the deities too presiding over it are constituted of darkness; and those who depart by this path also remain deluded by ignorance. Hence this second path has been styled as 'dark'.

The word 'Anāvṛttim' in this verse

stands for the supreme Abode of God, attaining which the practisant does not return to this mortal plane. In verse 24 it was stated that the Yogis departing by the 'bright' path finally reach Brahma or God. The word 'Anāvṛttim' has been used in this verse just in order to make it clear that on attaining Brahma or God one does not take birth again; hence He is also termed as 'Anāvṛtti'.

By using the expression 'Punah Āvartate', the Lord indicates that all the worlds attained through the 'dark' path are subject to appearance and disappearance. The intention is to show that the worlds which are reached through the 'dark' path are all perishable. Hence he who departs along this path has to return to the mortal plane.

*Now, while praising the Yogī who possesses knowledge of these two paths, the Lord exhorts Arjuna to become a Yogī.*

नैते सृती पार्थ जानन् योगी मुह्यति कश्चन ।

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु योगयुक्तो भवार्जुन ॥ २७ ॥

पार्थ O son of Kunti; एते these two; सृती paths; जानन् knowing; कश्चन any; योगी Yogī; न not; मुह्यति gets deluded; तस्मात् therefore; अर्जुन O Arjuna; सर्वेषु कालेषु at all times; योगयुक्तः भव be steadfast in Yoga.

Knowing thus the secret of these two paths, O son of Kunti, no Yogī gets deluded. Therefore, Arjuna, at all times be steadfast in Yoga in the form of equanimity (i. e., strive constantly for My realization). (27)

The word 'Sṛti', together with the demonstrative adjective 'Ete', stands for the two paths described in the preceding verses. The virtuous sotil who either performs religious acts or worships gods with an interested motive leaves this world by the 'dark' path and attains the heaven-world according to the relative worth of his Karma, returning to earth when the stock of his merits gets exhausted (IX. 20, 21). Even so the Karma-yogī, devoted to disinterested action or worship, and the Jñānayogī, who renounces the sense of doership, both depart by the bright path and reach the supreme Abode of God, whence they have no more to return. Realizing this truth full well and with perfect faith is what is meant by knowing the secret of these two paths.

means to God-Realization, such as Karma-yoga or the Yoga of Action, Dhyānayoga or the Yoga of Meditation, Bhaktiyoga or the Yoga of Devotion, and Jñānayoga or the Yoga of Knowledge, are to be known as Yogīs. Among such Yogīs who ever succeeds in realizing the truth about the two paths referred to above does not get deluded. This is what is indicated by the use of the word 'Kaśchana' in this verse. Even though pursuing any of the aforementioned Yogas he who does not know the secret of these two paths has a natural tendency to get attached to the enjoyments of this world or the next, and fall from Yoga. This is what is meant by his being deluded. On the other hand, he who knows the secret of these two paths does not get attached to any form of enjoyment, realizing as he does that enjoyments obtained in any of the worlds up to Brahmāloka are perishable and trivial, and remains constantly engaged in practices

All practiscants who follow any of the paths recommended in the Śāstras as a

leading to God-Realization. This is what is meant by his not getting deluded.

Arjuna; for it was this form of practice that Arjuna was eminently qualified for.

The importance of Yoga as a discipline for God-Realization is so great that the Yogi who is established in such a Yoga fully realizes the truth about these two paths, so that he no longer falls into the delusion of getting attached to any form of enjoyment. It is therefore that the Lord asks Arjuna to devote himself with reverence to the constant practice of Karmayoga with special emphasis on devotion, for the pleasure of the Lord Himself. This is the force of the use of the word 'Tasmāt' in this verse. Verse 7 of this chapter also contained a similar exhortation for

The exhortation referred to above is intended to emphasize the fact that the span of life allotted to a human being is extremely short, and one may be overtaken by death at any moment. If, therefore, a man does not strive to devote every moment of his life to a spiritual discipline, his Sādhana will suffer from occasional breaks. And if death overtakes him during any such break he will be compelled to take birth again as one fallen from Yoga. Therefore, it is incumbent on every human being to remain constantly engaged in practices leading to God-Realization.

*In this way the Lord exhorted Arjuna to be steadfast in Yoga. He now concludes the chapter by glorifying the man who is established in Yoga, and pointing out the fruit of applying himself to spiritual practice in accordance with the spirit of the profound truth revealed in the chapter.*

वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपःसु चैव दानेषु यत्पुण्यफलं प्रदिष्टम् ।

अत्येति तत्सर्वमिदं विदित्वा योगी परं स्थानमुपैति चाद्यम् ॥ २८ ॥

योगी the Yogi; इदम् this (profound truth); विदित्वा realizing; वेदेषु to (a study of) the Vedas; च as well as; यज्ञेषु to (the performance of) sacrifices; तपःसु to (the practice of) austerities; दानेषु (and) to the practice of charities; यत् which; पुण्यफलम् the reward; प्रदिष्टम् has been ascribed (in the scriptures); तत् that; सर्वम् all; एव doubtless; अत्येति transcends; च and; आद्यम् beginningless; परम् supreme; स्थानम् state; उपैति attains.

The Yogi, realizing this profound truth, doubtless transcends all the rewards, ascribed in the scriptures, to the study of the Vedas, as well as to the performance of sacrifices, austerities and charities, and attains the beginningless supreme state. (28)

The word 'Yogi' here stands for the practisant who constantly applies himself, with reverence and devotion, to any one of the practices that have been recommended in the scriptures as a means to God-Realization. 'Idam' covers the entire body of teachings contained in this chapter.

And realization of this profound truth consists in thoroughly grasping the meaning of whatever has been taught in this chapter, viz., the worship of both the qualified and absolute aspects of God, as well as of God with form and without form, the virtues, glory and greatness of



God, practices leading to God-Realization, the worlds from which man has to return and the state of being which brings cessation of rebirth and so on.

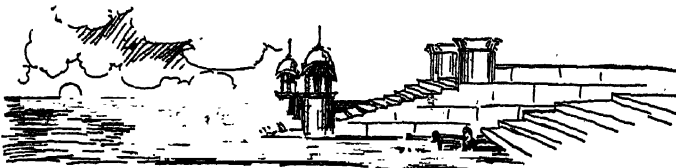
The word 'Vedas' covers all the four Vedas together with the branches of learning that are considered as auxiliary to them, as well as all other scriptures agreeing with the Vedas. 'Sacrifice' means all kinds of ritual acts enjoined by the scriptures, such as worship, offering of oblations into the sacred fire, and so on. Similarly 'austerities' means all forms of askesis recognized by the Śāstras, such as the observance of religious vows, keeping fasts, practice of sense-control, performance of one's own obligatory duties and so on. Even so 'Charities' include all kinds of gifts sanctioned by the Śāstras, such as the gift of food, the gift of learning, the gift of land etc., and all philanthropic acts. The word 'Punya' forming part of the compound word 'Punya-phalam' stands for the store of religious merit that accrues from a study of the Vedas and the performance of sacrifices, charities, austerities, and other religious acts, carried on with reverence and devotion and with an

interested motive; and the attainment of the various celestial worlds up to Brahma-loka and of the enjoyments obtained there is the fruit of such merit promised in the Vedas and other scriptures. Knowing all these worlds, as well as the enjoyments obtained in them, as transient and momentary, when one ceases to have any attraction for them, and cultivating complete indifference towards them actually leaves them far behind, one is said to have transcended all the rewards promised in the scriptures.

The word 'Sthānam' in this verse, together with the adjectives 'Param' and 'Ādyam' qualifying it, stands for that which has been spoken of in this very chapter as the supreme Abode of God, whence one does not return to the whirligig of births and deaths, and which is at the beginning of all, beyond all and superior to all. To realize it, and then enter it is what is meant by attaining it. Attainment of the supreme Goal, the supreme State or the Divine State, and Realization of the Divine Puruṣa are only other names for it.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां  
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे अक्षरब्रह्मयोगो  
नामाष्टमोऽध्यायः ॥ ८ ॥

\* Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the Dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the eighth chapter entitled "The Yoga of the Indestructible Brahma".



## Chapter IX

The knowledge imparted by the Lord in this chapter has been called by Him the sovereign science and the sovereign secret. Therefore, this chapter has been given the title of "Yoga of the sovereign science and the sovereign secret".

In verses 1 and 2 of this chapter, the Lord undertakes to impart to Arjuna once more the knowledge of both the absolute and embodied aspects of Divinity, and sings the glory of that Knowledge. Verse 3 declares that people having no faith in this knowledge revolve in the whirligig of births and deaths. In verses 4 to 6 the Lord describes, at the outset, the all-pervasive and detached character of His unmanifest aspect, and indicating His divine power of Yoga declares in the end that all beings abide in Him even as air abides in ether. Thereafter, verses 7 to 10 tell us how at the time of Final Dissolution all beings enter God's Prakṛti, how at the beginning of creation they are again brought forth by Prakṛti under His supervision, and how while engaged in such acts of creation and dissolution God ever remains unattached to them. Denouncing in verses 11 and 12 those who being unacquainted with God's supreme glory despise Him, the Lord tells us in verses 13 and 14 the way in which those great souls who are acquainted with His glory adore Him. Verse 15 speaks of the Jñānayogī, who worships God through his offering of Knowledge as one with him, as well as of those who worship Him in various ways in diverse celestial forms, such as the moon-god, the sun-god, Indra (the lord of paradise) and the god of fire etc., knowing them as distinct from themselves as well as from God. Describing His identity along with His virtues, glory and various manifestations in verses 16 to 19 the Lord tells us that the whole of this universe, both in its manifest and unmanifest form, is His own manifestation. Verses 20 and 21 declare that those who perform sacrifices and other religious acts for obtaining the enjoyments of heaven ascend to heaven only to return to this world when their allotted span is over. Verse 22 embodies the Lord's vow of personally supplying the needs and safeguarding the interests of devotees who constantly remember Him in a disinterested spirit. In verses 23 to 25 the Lord declares that even those who worship other deities indirectly worship Him, though with a mistaken approach, and that such devotees do not know Him in reality, the result being that whereas worshippers of the other gods go to those gods, His own worshippers attain Him. Showing devotion to be comparatively easy of practice in verse 26, Arjuna is exhorted in the twenty-seventh to offer all his acts to God; while verse 28 declares God-Realization to be the fruit of such offering. Declaring in

verse 29 that He is equally present in all beings, the Lord glorifies in the thirtieth and the thirtyfirst the adoration practised by him who is exclusively devoted to Him. In verse 32 the Lord tells us that surrender to Him ensures attainment of the supreme goal to women, Vaiśyas (members of the agriculturist and mercantile classes), Śūdras (those belonging to the artisan and labouring classes) and even to those of sinful birth. In verses 33 and 34 the Lord praises the pious Brahmans and devout royal sages, declares the human body to be mortal and exhorting Arjuna to surrender himself to Him, discusses the true character of surrender with all its limbs.

*At the beginning of Chapter VII, the Lord undertook to impart to Arjuna the knowledge of Nirguṇa Brahma along with the knowledge of manifest Divinity.*

Link of  
the  
Discourse

*Discussing that subject accordingly, He finally spoke of realizing God together with what He called Brahma, Adhyātma, Karma, Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva and Adhiyajña, and also of fixing one's thought on God at the hour of death. Thereupon, in Chapter VIII, Arjuna addressed*

*seven questions to the Lord in order to seek enlightenment on the above terms, as well as on the subject of worshipping God at the last hour. The Lord briefly answered six of these questions in verses 3 and 4 of that chapter, while all the remaining verses were taken up in answering the seventh. Thus the discussion of Jñāna or the Knowledge of Nirguṇa Brahma along with Viññāna or the Knowledge of manifest Divinity, started in Chapter VII, having not been completed, the Lord takes up the subject again in Chapter IX for a clearer exposition. And in order to establish the link of this discourse with the subject discussed in Chapter VII, He undertakes in the very first verse to unfold the Knowledge of Nirguṇa Brahma along with the Knowledge of manifest Divinity once more.*

श्रीभगवानुवाच

इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे ।

ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् ॥ १ ॥

अनसूयवे ते to you who are uncarping; इदम् this; गुह्यतमम् most secret; विज्ञानसहितम् along with the knowledge of manifest Divinity; ज्ञानम् the Knowledge of Nirguṇa Brahma; तु once more; प्रवक्ष्यामि shall discuss at length; यत् which; ज्ञात्वा knowing; अशुभात् from the evil of worldly existence; मोक्ष्यसे you shall be free.

Śrī Bhagavān said: To you, who are devoid of the carping spirit, I shall now unfold the most secret knowledge of Nirguṇa Brahma along with the knowledge of manifest Divinity, knowing which you shall be free from the evil of worldly existence.

(1)

The fault of 'Asūyā' consists in belittling the merits of men possessing merits, finding fault with their virtues, reviling them and attributing false blame to them. He who is entirely free from this evil of 'Asūyā' by his very nature is called 'Anasūyu'.

By calling Arjuna 'Anasūyu' or uncarping, the Lord indicates that he alone who has faith in Him, and is free from the fault-finding spirit, is qualified to receive the instruction contained in this chapter; while he who is lacking in faith, and full of the carping spirit, is disqualified for it. In XVIII. 67 the Lord explicitly states that the teaching of the Gītā should never be imparted to one who finds fault with Him.

The word 'Jñānam' with the adjectives 'Idam' and 'Vijñānasahitam' stands here for the knowledge of the Absolute, formless Brahma as well as that of the qualified aspect of God with form and without form along with the secret of their respective glory and greatness, and

the instructions leading to that knowledge, contained in Chapters VII, VIII and IX.

This knowledge has been described as 'Guhyatamam', 'the most secret thing', because of all secrets in the world the knowledge of the true character, love, virtues, glory, greatness and splendour etc. of the integral Divinity or Puruṣottama and the conception of surrender to Him are the most secret of all. Teachings of a similar nature embodied in verse 20 of Chapter XV and verse 64 of Chapter XVIII as well have been called most secret by the Lord.

The word 'evil' stands here for all forms of suffering and actions which are responsible for the same, vices of all kinds, the shackles of worldly existence in the form of birth and death, and the origin of them all, viz., Ignorance. Being rid of the evil of worldly existence, therefore, means securing complete and lasting immunity from all these and realizing God, the embodiment of supreme Bliss.

*In order to inspire Arjuna's faith in, and love for, the teaching which He promised to impart in the preceding verse, viz., the knowledge of absolute formless Brahma along with the knowledge of the qualified aspect of God, both with and without form, and in order to stimulate in him an ardent desire to hear it and carry it into practice, the Lord now reveals the true glory of such knowledge.*

राजविद्या राजगुह्यं पवित्रमिदमुत्तमम् ।

प्रत्यक्षावगमं धर्म्यं सुसुखं कर्तुमव्ययम् ॥ २ ॥

इदम् this Knowledge (of absolute formless Brahma along with the Knowledge of the qualified aspect of God with and without form); राजविद्या (is) a sovereign science; राजगुह्यम् a sovereign secret; पवित्रम् most holy; उत्तमम् most excellent; प्रत्यक्षावगमम् directly enjoyable; धर्म्यम् attended with virtue; कर्तुम् सुसुखम् very easy to practise; अव्ययम् (and) imperishable.

\* Our scriptures define 'Anasūyā' as follows:—

न गुणान् गुणिनो हन्ति स्तौति मन्दगुणानपि ।

नान्यदोषेषु रमते सानसूया प्रकीर्तिता ॥ (Atrismṛti, 34)

"He who does not detract from the merits of those possessing merits, praises even those of scanty worth and does not take delight in the faults of others is said to possess the virtue of Anasūyā."

This knowledge ( of both the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of Divinity ) is a sovereign science, a sovereign secret, supremely holy, most excellent, directly enjoyable, attended with virtue, very easy to practise and imperishable. ( 2 )

The word 'Idam' stands for the same 'Jñāna' and 'Vijñāna', i. e., knowledge of both the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of God, which the Lord undertook to unfold in the preceding verse. The knowledge referred to here is superior to all other known and unknown forms of knowledge; for him who has truly assimilated this knowledge, nothing remains to be known. It is therefore that it has been spoken of as a 'sovereign science'. The true nature of the qualified and absolute, as well as of the manifest and unmanifest aspects of God, His virtues, glory and greatness, the process of His worship and the fruit of such worship, all this has been fully dealt with in this knowledge. Besides this, the Lord has unfolded His whole secret here and revealed the truth that He who stood before Arjuna as Śrī Kṛṣṇa was none else than the Creator and Destroyer of the whole universe, the substratum of all, the Almighty Lord, the supreme Brahma, and the supreme Person, and that Arjuna should completely surrender himself to Him. Such a supreme secret could be revealed only before a qualified and faithful devotee like Arjuna, who was free from the carping spirit, and not before anybody and everybody. It is therefore that the Lord calls this knowledge 'a sovereign secret'.

This knowledge is so edifying and ennobling in character that whosoever hears of and reflects on it and acts according to it with faith is completely rid of all sins and vices and is hallowed for all time to come. It is therefore that it has been called 'supremely holy'. And of all that is good and noble in the world, it is the noblest and the best; therefore, it has been characterized as 'most excellent'.

The fruit of this knowledge of both the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of God is not something invisible like the effect of offering oblations to one's departed ancestors. Even as the practisant advances on the path of self-surrender to God he is rid of his vices, evil ways and sufferings, and begins to enjoy supreme peace and incomparable bliss. Nay, he who fully attains this knowledge immediately realizes God, the ocean of supreme peace and supreme bliss, supremely loving, highly compassionate and friendly to all. It is therefore that the Lord calls it 'directly enjoyable'. And besides it does not come in conflict with any other Dharmas or duties, such as those enjoined by one's Varna or grade in society and Āśrama or stage in life; and being a supreme virtue in itself, it is superior to every other form of virtue. Hence it is 'attended with virtue' or full of virtue.

Action performed with some interested motive ceases after yielding its fruit. Even so worldly knowledge, once acquired, is forgotten unless kept alive by constant reference. This knowledge of the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of God is, however, proof against decay. Once duly acquired, this knowledge never gets lost under any circumstance whatsoever. Moreover, its fruit too is imperishable. Hence it is called 'Avyaya' or imperishable. This should not, however, lead anyone to conclude that because this knowledge is of such a great moment, it must be very difficult indeed to act according to it and attain it. In order to obviate this misapprehension the Lord says: "It is very easy to practise." The long and short of it is that the practice of self-surrender to God, as advised in this chapter, is exceptionally easy. For it involves no exertion of any kind, nor does it require

any external undertaking or preparation. this path begins to enjoy supreme peace To say nothing of those who have attained and incomparable bliss from the very perfection in it, the practicant treading beginning of his practice.

*If the knowledge of both the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of God is of such a great moment, and its practice also so very easy, one is tempted to ask: Why does everybody not adopt the same? In order to show that failure to adopt it is mainly attributable to want of faith, the Lord now proceeds to denounce those who do not repose faith in this knowledge.*

अश्रद्धाः पुरुषा धर्मस्यास्य परंतप ।

अप्राप्य मां निवर्तन्ते मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि ॥ ३ ॥

परंतप O scorcher of foes, Arjuna; अस्य धर्मस्य in this Dharma; अश्रद्धाः reposing no faith; पुरुषाः people; माम् Me; अप्राप्य failing to reach; मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि in the path of the world of death; निवर्तन्ते revolve.

Arjuna, people having no faith in this Dharma, failing to reach Me, revolve in the path of the world of death. (3)

The word 'Dharmasya', with the demonstrative adjective 'Asya' qualifying it, stands for the knowledge of the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of God, which has been extolled in the preceding verse, and which has been discussed in the whole of this chapter. 'Reposing no faith in this Dharma' means entertaining doubt and misconception about the statements contained in this chapter regarding the essential character, glory, virtues and greatness of God, the means to His realization and the fruit of such realization as untrue, far from possible and contrary to facts, belittling them as nothing but sentiments couched in an attractive garb, and entertaining other such notions which run counter to faith.

'Aśraddadhānāḥ' (lacking in faith) refers to those who having no faith in the essential character, virtues, glory and

greatness etc. of God, do not practise devotion to Him in any form and fritter away their human existence, which is such a rare acquisition, in enjoying worldly pleasures and obtaining the means to such enjoyment.

In course of his peregrination through eight million and four hundred thousand varieties of existence as living beings the Jīva rarely attains the human body through the grace of God for securing liberation from the cycle of births and deaths, and realizing God. Even after obtaining such a rare boon in the shape of human existence, those who fail to practise adoration and meditation etc. through lack of faith in the teachings of the Lord are unable to realize God and begin to revolve as heretofore in the whirligig of births and deaths. This is what the Lord seeks to convey through this verse.

*Commencing His teaching on the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of God, which He promised to impart and extolled in the foregoing verses, the Lord now proceeds first of all to describe His Unmanifest aspect along with Its glory.*

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।

मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥ ४ ॥

अव्यक्तमूर्तिना मया by Me as unmanifest Divinity; इहम् this; सर्वम् entire; जगत् universe; तत् is permeated (as ice by water); च and; सर्वभूतानि all beings; मत्स्थानि rest on (the idea within) Me; अहम् (therefore, really speaking,) I; तेषु in them; न not; अवस्थितः (am) present.

The whole of this universe is permeated by Me as unmanifest Divinity, and all beings rest on the idea within Me. Therefore, really speaking, I am not present in them. (4)

The word 'Avyaktamūrtinā' stands for that all-pervading, formless Divinity with attributes, who has been referred to as 'Adhiyajña' in verse 4 of Chapter VIII, as the 'supreme Divine Puruṣa' in verses 8 and 10, as 'the all-wise eternal Being' in verse 9, as the 'Unmanifest' and 'Indestructible' in verses 20 and 21, and as 'the supreme Puruṣa attainable only through exclusive Devotion' in verse 22.

The word 'Jagat', with the adjectives 'Idam' and 'Sarvam' qualifying it, stands for the whole universe consisting of the entire sentient and insentient creation.

Even as the air, fire, water and earth are permeated by ether, an ornament of gold is permeated by gold, and earthenware is permeated by earth, so is the entire universe permeated by the unmanifest aspect of God with attributes, who is its Creator. The Śruti says:—

"Whatever sentient and insentient creation there is in this universe, all that is permeated by God."\* (Iṣopaniṣad, I)

The word 'Sarvabhūtāni' in this verse stands for all sentient and insentient beings, including their bodies, senses, mind, intellect, and their objects, as well as the abodes of such beings. Laying hold of His Prakṛti, God Himself creates, sustains, and destroys the universe; it is He who holds this entire creation in an infinitesimal part of His Being (X. 42); and He alone is the goal, sustainer, abode, support, resting-place, origin, end

and repository of all (IX. 18). In this way the existence of all beings depends on God. It is therefore that the verse speaks of all beings as resting in God.

Though permeating every atom of this universe, even as the atmosphere pervades every particle of a cloud, God is entirely beyond the world, and absolutely unconnected with it. He remains intact even when the entire universe is no more, just as the atmosphere remains intact even after the dispersal of the cloud. God does not cease with the cessation of the world. He shines in His glory even where there is no trace of any material existence. This is what the Lord seeks to bring out when He says that really speaking, He is not in beings. In other words, He is eternally existent in His own Self.

The statement of the Lord: 'I am not in them', may be explained in other ways also as given below:—

Just as all living beings and objects seen in a dream being in the dreamer, the latter is not wholly limited by the objects of his dream, but exists beyond them as well, even so God, though permeating the whole universe, is not limited by it inasmuch as the latter exists in a fraction of His Being. Thus, being greater than the world, and its substratum, He is not in the world alone.

Secondly, a dreamer, though directly perceiving all the objects of dream in

\* ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।

the course of his dream, has really no connection whatsoever with such objects or with the acts of his dream, and remains wholly beyond and unconnected with the dream-world; he existed before the dream, exists even while dreaming, and will exist after waking from the dream. Even so God ever exists and does not cease even when the whole world ceases to exist. On the other hand, He shines in His own glory even where there is no trace of the world. Thus, being altogether beyond the world, and unattached to it, He is not in the world.

Thirdly, just as the objects perceived in a dream being really non-different from the dreamer, nay, his very self, he is not in them, but he alone exists, even so the world being identical with God, nay, the very self of God, He is not in the world, but He alone is.

Thus, being the substratum of the world, and wholly beyond it, and the world being His very self, God is not in the world. From the monistic standpoint this view also is quite correct.

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।

भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः ॥ ५ ॥

च and; भूतानि ( all those ) beings; मत्स्थानि abiding in Me; न not; मे Mine; ऐश्वरम् योगम् ( the wonderful power of ) My divine Yoga; पश्य behold; भूतभृन् the Sustainer of beings; च and; भूतभावनः the Creator of beings; मम Mine; आत्मा Self; भूतस्थः dwelling in beings; न not.

Nay, all those beings abide not in Me; but behold the wonderful power of My divine Yoga: though the Sustainer and Creator of beings, My Self in reality dwells not in those beings. ( 5 )

The preceding verse stated that all beings abide in God; whereas in the present verse the Lord says, "Those beings do not abide in Me." How are these contradictory statements to be reconciled? By inviting Arjuna to behold the wonderful power of His divine Yoga in this connection the Lord indicates that what appears impossible on the face of it can be made possible by the miraculous power of His divine Yoga. Just as a cloud both does and does not exist in the atmosphere, even so the world exists, and also does not exist in Him. The entire world is a creation of His power of Yoga, and He is its substratum; therefore all beings exist in Him. And notwithstanding this, He is wholly beyond them all; hence the world does not exist in Him. Therefore, so long as the world exists in one's conception, everything abides in God; the world has

no other substratum than God. And when a man realizes God, nothing exists in his conception but God; therefore in the eyes of him who has attained this state, the world does not exist in God.

The statement of the Lord contained in this verse can also be interpreted in a different way so as to confirm rather than contradict what He stated in the preceding verse. When it is conceded that as the dream-world rests on the thought of the dreamer even so the entire universe hangs on God's thought alone, and that really speaking there is no existence apart from God, it will be easy to understand the statement of the Lord that 'those beings do not abide' in Him. If so, how does the world appear before the eyes? What is the secret of its appearance? Anticipating this question the Lord says, "That is a



miracle of My wonderful power of Yoga. The world does appear in Me, and in reality nothing exists apart from Me. How wonderful!" That is to say, so long as the world exists in the eyes of man, everything abides in God; the world has no other substratum than God. And in reality God alone is everything, nothing exists but God. On realizing God, the practisant directly perceives this truth. In the eyes of such a God-realized soul nothing exists apart from God. Therefore, it is quite correct to say that those beings do not really exist in God. From the monistic standpoint this interpretation appears to be quite sound.

The words 'Aśwaram Yogam' denote the wonderful power, possessed by none

other than God, of remaining absolutely detached from everything, even though creating and sustaining everything, and pervading the whole creation. While inviting Arjuna to behold the wonderful power of His divine Yoga, the Lord refers to all the facts mentioned in this and the preceding verse.

By using the words 'Mama Ātmā' the Lord refers to His qualified, formless aspect. For it is this formless aspect of God possessed of attributes, that creates and sustains this universe. This is what the Lord means by speaking of His Self as 'the Sustainer and Creator of beings'. But, nevertheless, God is in reality wholly beyond this world. It is therefore that the verse says: "He dwells not in those beings".

*In the preceding verses the Lord stated that all beings are permeated by, and dwell in His unmanifest aspect. In order to elucidate the point further the idea is explained in the following verse by means of an illustration.*

यथाऽऽकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान् ।

तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय ॥ ६ ॥

यथा just as; सर्वत्रगः moving everywhere; महान् वायुः the extensive air; नित्यम् आकाशस्थितः (is) ever present in ether (because born of ether); तथा even so; सर्वाणि भूतानि all beings (because they have originated from My thought); मत्स्थानि (are) dwelling in Me; इति thus; उपधारय know.

Just as the extensive air, which is moving everywhere, (being born of ether) ever remains in ether, likewise know that all beings (who have originated from My thought) abide in Me. (6)

In order to bring out the similarity of all beings with air, the terms 'Mahān' and 'Sarvatragah' have been used with reference to air. That is to say, just as the air has access all round, even so all beings are ever wandering from one state of existence to another; and just as the air is very extensive in volume, even so the multitude of beings is very large.

The air has its origin in ether, it stays in ether, and also disappears into

ether. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the word 'Nityam' with reference to 'Ākāśasthitah'. The intention is to show that at every moment and under all circumstances ether is the substratum of air.

Like ether, God is uniform, formless, actionless, infinite, unattached and immutable; and like the air all beings spring from God, abide in God and finally merge into God. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the simile employed in this

verse. Sprung from ether, remaining in and finally disappearing into ether, air can never and under no circumstance remain apart from ether but ever remains in it; and yet ether has no connection whatsoever with the air or its movement and other changes in it, and is always beyond it. Even so, since the emanation, existence and dissolution of beings are events that take place only in the thought of God, the whole multitude of beings exists in God alone; and yet God is entirely beyond those beings, and is always wholly immune from all sorts of changes.

*While discussing the knowledge of the Nirguṇa and Saṅguṇa aspects of God, and its glory, the Lord depicted so far the all-pervasive, unattached and immutable character of His formless aspect just with a view to revealing the truth about it. Now, while elucidating His character as the Creator of beings, He refers in the next two verses to the destruction of beings during the Final Dissolution, and to their emanation at the beginning of the next creation, with a view to explaining the truth of His acts of creation etc.*

सर्वभूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम् ।

कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विस्जाम्यहम् ॥ ७ ॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna, कल्पक्षये during the Final Dissolution; सर्वभूतानि all beings; मामिकाम् Mine; प्रकृतिम् Prakṛti; यान्ति enter; कल्पादौ (and) at the beginning of creation; तानि them; अहम् I; पुनः again; विस्जामि send forth.

Arjuna, during the Final Dissolution all beings enter My Prakṛti (the Prime Cause), and at the beginning of creation, I send them forth again. (7)

A whole daytime of Brahmā is known as a 'Kalpa', and his nights are also of the same duration. Taking this as a unit we can gauge the extent of a whole lifetime of Brahmā consisting of a hundred years. The word 'Kalpakṣaya' denotes the expiry of a whole lifetime of Brahmā. It is also known as the Final Dissolution (Mahāpralaya).

The word 'Sarvabhūtāni' stands for all sentient and insentient beings, including their body, senses, mind, intellect, objects of enjoyment and abodes etc.

'Prakṛti' denotes the prime cause of the universe, or Primordial Nature, which has been referred to as 'Mahadbrahma' in verses 3 and 4 of Chapter XIV, and which is also called 'Pradhāna' or undifferentiated Matter. By calling it

'Māmikām' (Mine) the Lord indicates that this Prakṛti is His own Energy. During the Final Dissolution all embodied beings, including their body, senses, mind, intellect, objects of enjoyment and abodes, get dissolved into Prakṛti. In other words, they return to Primordial Nature along with their causal body, consisting of the latencies of their Guṇas and Karmas. This is what is meant by the entering of all beings in Prakṛti.

It will be remembered that verses 18 and 19 of Chapter VIII also speak of the emanation of beings from the Unmanifest at the commencement of the cosmic day, and of their merging into the same at the commencement of the cosmic night. It will, therefore, be relevant to ask here: Is that 'Unmanifest' the

मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः सृजते सचराचरम् ।  
हेतुनानेन कौन्तेय जगद्विपरिवर्तते ॥ १० ॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kunti, Arjuna; मया अध्यक्षेण with Me as the supervisor; प्रकृतिः Prakṛti (Nature); सचराचरम् (the whole creation) consisting of sentient and insentient beings; सृजते brings forth; अनेन हेतुना due to this cause (alone); जगत् (the wheel of) Samsāra; विपरिवर्तते is going round.

Arjuna, with Me as the supervisor, Nature brings forth the whole creation, consisting of both sentient and insentient beings; it is due to this cause that the wheel of Samsāra is going round. (10)

By calling Himself a mere supervisor, the Lord indicates that with reference to the processes of creation etc. of this universe the Lord stands as a mere presiding Spirit to whom Nature owes its existence and activity; and that deriving its existence and activity from Him, it is His Prakṛti which carries on all such activities as the creation of this universe.

The cultivator himself unites the seed with the earth as a supervisor; the earth then brings forth varieties of plants according to the seeds sown by the cultivator. So does God sow the seed of life in Prakṛti as a supervising agent (XIV. 3). In this way when union between Matter and Spirit has been brought about, Prakṛti evolves the entire creation of both sentient and insentient beings in various species of life according to the respective Karma of each being.

This illustration has been given only to convey a rough idea of the process; in reality, however, there is no similarity between the cultivator and God. For the cultivator, on the one hand, has a limited knowledge and limited power and is confined to a limited space; and he cannot make the earth yield anything by communicating his own strength or energy. God, on the other hand, is all-knowing, all-powerful and all-pervading. Nature itself derives its existence and activity from Him and it is through His energy,

that it brings forth the entire creation.

In short, it is God's supervision and the doership of Prakṛti, that are responsible for all such activities as the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the latter half of the verse.

In verse 13 of Chapter IV and again in verse 8 of this chapter, the Lord stated that it was He who brought forth the multitude of beings in their different forms; whereas in the present verse He says that the whole creation consisting of sentient and insentient beings is evolved by Prakṛti. Though these two statements appear as mutually contradictory, there is really speaking no contradiction between them. Statements in which the Lord declares Himself to be the Creator of the world should be understood to mean that He does not actually create the world Himself, but that He does so through the medium of His energy, viz., Prakṛti, which He wields on such occasions. And where He speaks of Nature as carrying on the creation etc. of the world it should be understood that the latter does so under His supervision; for she derives her existence and activity from Him. She cannot do anything independently without the backing of God. It is therefore that the Lord said in verse 8, "Wielding My Nature, I bring forth the creation;" whereas in the present verse He says:

"With Me as the supervisor, Nature evolves statements represent the same fact from two the universe". In reality, these two different points of view.

*While discussing the knowledge of the Saguna and Nirguna aspects of God as promised by Him, the Lord dealt with in verses 4 to 6 of this chapter the secret and glory of His formless aspect with attributes. Thereafter, showing in verses 7 to 10, His non-attachment and indifference to all such activities as the creation of the world, He pointed out the secret of the transcendence of such actions. Now, in order to bring out the importance of His qualified and embodied aspect, the way to adore Him through devotion, and the secret of His virtues and glory He proceeds in the next two verses to denounce those men of a demoniac disposition, who are ignorant of His greatness.*

अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् ।

परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥ ११ ॥

मम Mine; परम् भावम् supreme nature; अजानन्तः not knowing; मूढाः fools; मानुषीम् तनुम् a human semblance; आश्रितम् having assumed; माम् Me; भूतमहेश्वरम् the supreme Lord of (the entire) Creation; अवजानन्ति think low of.

Fools, not knowing My supreme nature, think low of Me, the Overlord of the entire creation, who have put on the human semblance. (That is to say, they take Me, who have appeared in human garb through My Yoga-māyā for the deliverance of the world, for an ordinary mortal.) (11)

The substantive 'Bhāvam' with its qualification 'Param', in this verse, stands for that supreme glory of the Lord, which has been represented in verses 4 to 6 in the form of attributes such as 'all-pervasiveness' etc., nay, which has been further referred to as His 'divine Yoga', and which has been spoken of in verse 24 of Chapter VII as screened from the knowledge of the unwise. Out of compassion for all embodied souls and in order to take them all under His protection, and with a view to establishing Dharma, redeeming His devotees and enacting various other sports, the all-pervading and all-powerful God, who is the substratum of all, and who creates and destroys the whole universe, Himself appeared in a human garb as Śrī Kṛṣṇa through His own Yogamāyā or divine potency (IV. 6-8). Those who

are ignorant of this secret and have no faith in it are referred to here as not knowing the supreme nature of the Lord.

The word 'Mūḍhāḥ' (fools), in this verse, stands for men possessed of a fiendish and demoniacal nature, referred to in the next verse as well as in VII. 15, and whose distinguishing marks have been discussed in verses 7 to 20 of Chapter XVI. Not knowing His transcendent glory as the supreme Lord of all embodied beings, from Brahmā, the Creator, down to the tiniest insect such fools look down upon Śrī Kṛṣṇa as an ordinary human being just like themselves, and therefore disobey His commands and level absurd charges against Him. This is what is meant when the Lord says, "Fools think low of Me."\*

\* The venerable Bhiṣma related to Duryodhana a dialogue between Brahmā and other celestials about Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. That gives an indication of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's glory. Cautioning the celestials, Brahmā said:—

मोघाशा मोघकर्माणो मोघज्ञाना विचेतसः ।

राक्षसीमासुरीं चैव प्रकृतिं मोहिनीं श्रिताः ॥ १२ ॥

मोघाशाः cherishing vain hopes; मोघकर्माणः indulging in futile pursuits; मोघज्ञानाः possessing fruitless knowledge; विचेतसः bewildered persons; राक्षसीम् fiendish; आसुरीम् demoniac; च and; मोहिनीम् delusive; प्रकृतिम् nature; एव alone; श्रिताः have embraced.

Those bewildered persons with vain hopes, futile actions and fruitless knowledge have embraced a fiendish, demoniacal and delusive nature. ( 12 )

The term 'Moghāsāh' stands for men possessed of hopes and aspirations which never reach their fulfilment. Such vain hopes are always nursed by men of the demoniac type, who have no idea of God's glory and power ( XVI. 10-20 ). Hence they have been spoken of as 'Moghāsāh' in this verse.

'Moghakarmāṇah' refers to those whose activities in the form of sacrificial performance, charity and austere penance etc. are futile, i. e., do not yield the fruit promised in the scriptures. Sacrifices etc. performed without faith, and in contravention of scriptural ordinance, by low types of worldly-minded men, who possess no faith in God nor in the scriptures, bring

them no fruit either in this world or in the next. That is why such men have been called 'Moghakarmāṇah', or indulging in futile actions ( XVI. 23; XVII. 28 ).

The word 'Moghajñānāh' stands for those whose knowledge bears no fruitful result, and is founded neither on truth, nor on reasoning ( XVIII. 22 ). Regarding worldly enjoyments as real and delightful, men who possess no knowledge of God's glory remain addicted to such enjoyments. They erroneously believe that the highest joy consists only in the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures, and that there is nothing higher than that ( XVI. 11 ); it is therefore that they remain deprived of true happiness. Hence they have been spoken

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"Bhagavān Vāsudeva ( son of Vasudeva ), the supreme Lord of all the worlds, is worthy of adoration to you all. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who bears the marks of Bhagavān Viṣṇu Himself, viz., His conch, discus and club, wields extraordinary power. Never despise Him as an ordinary human being. He is the supreme secret, the supreme goal, the supreme Reality, and the supreme glory. He is indestructible, unmanifest, eternal, the supreme Effulgence, the supreme Bliss and the supreme Truth. No celestial nor the lord of heaven, Indra, much less any human being, should ever ignore Lord Vāsudeva, the possessor of infinite strength, treating Him as a human being. He is the Ruler of all senses. Fools, who declare Him to be an ordinary man, are the most vile among men. This great Master of Yoga is the very soul of the entire creation. He bears the distinguishing mark of Śrīvatsa ( a curl of golden hair on the chest ). He is the same as the most illustrious Viṣṇu, who has a lotus sprung from His navel. Those who insult Him holding Him to be an ordinary mortal, and fail to recognize Him in His true colours are possessed of a Tamasic disposition. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa bears a typical diadem on His head and the celebrated Kaustubha jewel on His chest, and dispels the fear of His friends. He who treats him with contumely is condemned to the most terrible hell.

एवं विदित्वा तत्त्वार्थं लोकानामीश्वरेश्वरः ।

वासुदेवो नमस्कार्यः सर्वलोकैः सुरोत्तमाः ॥ ( Mahā, Bhīṣma. 66. 23 )

"O great celestials, knowing thus His essential character, all should humbly bow their heads to Bhagavān Vāsudeva, the supreme Lord of all creation."

of as 'Moghaññāṇāḥ'. Misusing their faculty of knowledge, such men wantonly throw it away.

Those whose mind is distracted, and is ever unsteady, because of its attachment to the various objects of the world, are called 'Vichetasah'. The mind of men possessed of a demoniac temperament goes on frisking every moment from one thought to another. That is why such persons have been spoken of as 'Vichetasah', or bewildered.

He who is disposed, like fiends, to bear ill-will towards others without any rhyme or reason, as well as to injure others and inflict suffering on them is said to possess a 'fiendish nature'. Even so the tendency to persecute others, and

rob them of their legitimate dues or possessions out of lust or greed, and with a view to achieving one's own selfish ends is called a 'demoniac disposition'. And lastly, the proclivity to inflict suffering on others through error of judgment or delusion, is known as the delusive nature. Instead of trying to renounce such vicious propensities he who deliberately clings to them, believing them to be good and desirable, is said to have 'embraced such natures'. Men who have no knowledge of the glory of God generally do so; that is why they have been spoken of as having embraced such a nature.

The use of the indeclinable 'Eva' indicates that such men invariably embrace the fiendish, demoniacal and delusive nature, and never adopt the divine nature.

*Denouncing in the above words men possessed of the demoniac nature, who have no idea of the glory of God, the Lord now proceeds to describe the marks of the superior type of devotees, who are conversant with the glory of God, love none else than God, and have embraced the divine nature, with a view to revealing the truth about devotion to the Saguna aspect of God.*

महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।

भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥ १३ ॥

tu on the other hand; पार्थ O son of Pṛthā (Kunti), Arjuna; दैवीम् प्रकृतिम् the divine nature; आश्रिताः having embraced; महात्मानः great souls; माम् Me; भूतादिम् the prime source of all lives; अव्ययम् (and) the imperishable eternal; ज्ञात्वा knowing (as); अनन्यमनसः with none else in mind; भजन्ति (constantly) worship.

On the other hand, Arjuna, great souls who have embraced the divine nature, knowing Me as the prime source of all lives and the imperishable eternal, worship Me constantly with none else in mind. (13)

The indeclinable 'Tu' has been employed in this verse with a view to bringing out the contrast between the low types of ignorant men, possessed of the demoniac nature, as described in verses 11 and 12 above, and the superior type of men,

possessed of special merit, described in the present verse.

The word 'Prakṛtim', along with the adjective 'Daivīm' qualifying it, signifies virtues of the Sattvic type, which essentially

belong to God ( Deva ) and lead one to the realization of God, and which have been mentioned in verses 1 to 3 of Chapter XVI under 26 different names, such as 'Fearlessness' etc. To adopt and cultivate such virtues is what is meant by 'embracing the divine nature'.

'Mahātmā' means one who possesses a great soul. And a great soul is he who has clung to God in every way with the object of achieving his great aim of God-Realization. Therefore, the term 'Mahātmānah' has been used in the present verse to indicate those disinterested devotees of God who love none else than God, who are ever steeped in divine love, and who are from every point of view qualified for God-Realization.

The word 'Mām' ( Me ) refers to God with attributes, or Puruṣottama ( the Supreme Person ) as the Gītā calls Him. It is God with attributes who is responsible for the creation, maintenance and destruction of all sentient and insentient beings

including the worlds inhabited by them as well as their body, senses, mind intellect and objects of enjoyment ( VII. 6 IX. 18; X. 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 ). He who realizes this truth can be said to recognize God as the prime source of all lives. Again, God is unborn and imperishable; it is only to shower His grace on the various Jivas that He assumes and hides the human form as a matter of sport. It is He who is termed as the imperishable and indestructible Supreme Brahma or the supreme Spirit. He does not perish even when all beings perish ( VIII. 20 ). He who realizes this fact can be said to recognize God as 'the imperishable Eternal'.

The term 'Ananyamanasaḥ' stands for devotees possessed of exclusive love for God, whose mind does not feel attracted towards anything else than God, and to whom even a moment's separation from God appears quite unbearable. Such a devotee constantly worships God in the manner described in the next verse, as well as in X. 9.

*The Lord now proceeds to tell us how the love-intoxicated devotees referred to above worship God.*

सततं कीर्तयन्तो मां यतन्तश्च दृढव्रताः ।

नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ॥ १४ ॥

दृढव्रताः ( those devotees ) of firm resolve; सततम् constantly; कीर्तयन्तः chanting ( My names and glories ); च and; यतन्तः striving ( for My realization ); च and; माम् to Me; नमस्यन्तः bowing ( again and again ); नित्ययुक्ताः ever united ( with Me through meditation ); भक्त्या with ( single-minded ) devotion; माम् Me; उपासते worship.

Constantly chanting My names and glories and striving for My realization, and bowing again and again to Me, those devotees of firm resolve, ever united with Me through meditation, worship Me with single-minded devotion.

( 14 )

Those who are steadfast in their vow and firm in their resolve, are called 'Dṛḍhavrataḥ'. The loving devotees of God are adamant in their resolve, unwavering in their faith, firm in their conclusion and resolute in their vows. The most

terrible calamities and the mightiest obstacles fail to deter them from their practice or shake them from their resolution or opinion. It is therefore that the Lord speaks of them as 'devotees of firm resolve'.

The adverb 'Satatam' denotes continuity of practice. It mainly qualifies the verb 'Upāsate'. Chanting of God's names and glories and offering salutations etc. to Him being parts of worship, the word can be indirectly said to refer to them as well. In other words, the loving devotees of God are ever engaged in the worship of God, now chanting His names or singing his glories, now bowing to Him, now striving to realize Him through service and other ways and all the time keeping the mind fixed on Him.

Expatiating on the incomparable virtues, glory, greatness and sports etc. of God before devotees through religious discourses and lectures etc.; muttering or loudly chanting, either singly or in company, the sacred Names of God, such as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, Hari, Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudeva, Keśava, Mādhava, Śiva and so on, visualizing God to be present before the practisant; singing the praises, glory or stories of God with full faith and love, in a subdued or loud tone, either standing or squatting, and to the accompaniment of music and dance or without the same; offering praises or praying to God through the utterance of beautiful poems and psalms, and all other activities of an allied nature are covered by the participle 'Kīrtayantaḥ'.

The word 'Yatantaḥ' should be understood to mean offering worship to God,

rendering bodily and other services to all regarding them as the very embodiment of God, hearing of the virtues, glory and stories etc. of God from the lips of His devotees, and practising with zeal and assiduity all other limbs of devotion not directly mentioned in this verse.

Visiting a temple and prostrating oneself with faith and love before the sacred image of God enshrined therein; bowing before an image or picture of God installed in one's own house; making obeisance to the divine names represented in letters; offering salutations to the feet of an image or picture of God or to the marks thereof; bowing before sacred books discussing the truth, mysteries, love, and glory of God and narrating His sweet stories; and bowing with due respect, reverence and love, with a voice choked with emotion and with mind, speech and body all whom one meets looking upon them as an embodiment of God, or recognizing God to be present in their heart,—all this is covered by the words 'bowing again and again to God.'

The word 'Nityayuktāḥ' has been used with reference to those devotees who constantly keep their mind fixed on God even while they are walking or moving about, standing or sitting, lying asleep or awake, and performing all sorts of activities or practising meditation in seclusion.

Exclusive love mixed with faith and reverence is called devotion. Worshipping God with devotion, therefore, means carrying on without interruption all the practices enumerated above with faith and exclusive love.

*Describing thus the mode of worship practised by devotees possessing exclusive love for God, and conversant with His virtues, glory etc., the Lord now reveals the mode of worship practised by other types of worshippers.*

ज्ञानयज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये यजन्तो मामुपासते ।

एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वतोमुखम् ॥ १५ ॥

अन्ये others (viz., those who tread the path of Knowledge); माम् Me (in My Absolute, formless state); ज्ञानयज्ञेन through their offering of Knowledge;



यजन्तः worshipping; एकत्वेन as one ( with themselves ); उपासते betake themselves ( to Me ); च अपि and still others; पृथक्त्वेन through diversity ( i. e., taking Me to be diverse in diverse celestial forms ); बहुधा in many ways; विश्वतोमुखम् ( worship Me in ) a universal Form facing all sides.

Others ( who follow the path of Knowledge ) betake themselves to Me through their offering of Knowledge, worshipping Me ( in My absolute, formless aspect ) as one with themselves; while still others worship Me in My Universal Form in many ways, taking Me to be diverse in diverse celestial forms. ( 15 )

The word 'Anye' ( others ) has been used in the verse to distinguish the Jñānayogis from the category of devotees mentioned above.

It is the absolute, formless aspect of God that is worshipped through the offering of Knowledge. Hence the word 'Mām' has been interpreted in that sense. By using the word 'Mām' in this connection, the Lord establishes His identity with the attributeless Brahma, who is absolute Truth, pure Knowledge and unmixed Bliss.

The 'offering of Knowledge' mentioned in this verse is the same as Jñānayoga, or the discipline of Knowledge, referred to in III. 3. He who worships God through the practice of Jñānayoga believes that the activities carried on by the body, senses and mind represent only the reaction of the Guṇas, born of Māyā, on the Guṇas themselves, and therefore does not entertain the sense of doership in respect of those activities. He views the whole objective existence as analogous to water appearing in a mirage or as the world seen in a dream. He refuses to recognize the existence of anything other than the absolute, formless Brahma or God, who is absolute Truth, pure Knowledge and

unmixed Bliss. It is His talk that he hears, His truth that he reflects on and His essence that He constantly meditates upon. In this way he is ever engaged in the practice of constantly remaining in a state of at-one-ment with Brahma. This is what is meant by worshipping God through the offering of Knowledge.

The indeclinables 'Cha' and 'Api' have been used to bring out the distinction between the Jñānayogis referred to above and the other type of worshippers mentioned in this verse.

God Himself is present before us in the form of the universe. Therefore, the various celestials mentioned in the scriptures, such as the moon-god, the sun-god, the god of fire, Indra (the lord of paradise), and Varuṇa ( the god of water ), who represent so many limbs of His Universal Form, are in reality nothing but the different aspects of God. Regarding them, however, as separate gods and worshipping them according to the rules and procedure of worship laid down for each is what is meant by 'worshipping' God in His universal Form diversely in diverse forms'.

*In order to make it clear how the worship of the Absolute and that of the different celestials too is regarded as the worship of God Himself, the Lord now proceeds to establish in the next four verses that the whole universe, and whatever lies beyond it, is nothing but God Himself.*

अहं क्रतुरहं यज्ञः स्वधाहमहमौषधम् ।

मन्त्रोऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम् ॥ १६ ॥

क्रतुः the Vedic ritual; अहम् (am) I; यज्ञः the sacrifice; अहम् (am) I; स्वधा the offering to the departed; अहम् (am) I; औषधम् the herbage and foodgrains; अहम् (am) I; मन्त्रः the sacred formula; अहम् (am) I; आज्यम् the clarified butter; अहम् (am) I; अग्निः the (sacred) fire; अहम् (am) I; हुतम् (even) the act of offering oblations (into the fire); अहम् I (am); एव indeed.

I am the Vedic ritual, I am the sacrifice, I am the offering to the departed, I am the herbage and foodgrains; I am the sacred formula, I am the clarified butter, I am the sacred fire, and I am verily the act of offering oblations into the fire. (16)

In this verse the Lord indicates that all ritual acts enjoined by the Vedas and Smṛti texts for the propitiation of the different gods and manes, as well as the various means of performing them, are the same as God Himself. The Vedic rituals are called by the name of 'Kratu'. Similarly, the rituals enjoined by the Smṛtis, such as the five great sacrifices and so on, are known by the name of 'Yajña'; and the food offered to the Manes is termed as 'Swadhā'. The Lord declares that all these constitute His Being. And whatever plants, foodgrains and medicinal herbs are required for the performance of these functions are also His manifestations. Even so the Mantras or sacred incantations employed in these performances are His verbal images. He is the clarified butter and other materials offered in these sacrifices. He constitutes the sacred fires known by the names of 'Gārhapatya', 'Āhavanīya', 'Dakṣiṇāgni' and so on, used in these sacrifices, and

lastly, He Himself is the act of offering oblations into the fire, which constitutes a sacrificial performance. That is to say, the articles required for the performance of sacred rituals sanctioned by the scriptures, such as a sacrifice, Śrāddha (a ceremony intended to gratify the soul of one's departed ancestors) and so on, the sacred formulae used in these performances, the altar at which the oblation is offered to the deity, and all activities of the mind, speech and body connected with such performances—all these represent Him. It is in order to prove His identity with everything mentioned in this verse that the Lord has used the word 'I' with every one of the objects enumerated by Him. The use of 'Eva' emphasizes the fact that there is nothing in this world apart from God. In this way it is God who is manifested in the form of various objects; they appear different from God only because we are ignorant of the truth about Him.

पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः ।

वेद्यं पवित्रमौंकार ऋक् साम यजुरेव च ॥ १७ ॥

अस्य जगतः of this universe; धाता sustainer and he who awards to each the fruit of his action; पिता father; माता mother; पितामहः grandsire; वेद्यम् the one worth knowing; पवित्रम् purifier; औंकारः the sacred syllable OM; ऋक् the

R̥gveda; साम the Sāmaveda; च and; यजुः the Yajurveda (also); अहम् (am) I; एव indeed.

I am the sustainer and ruler of this universe, its father, mother and grandfather, the one worth knowing, the purifier, the sacred syllable OM, and the three Vedas—R̥k, Yajus and Sāma. (17)

The word 'Jagatah' stands for the entire creation consisting of both sentient and insentient beings. The whole of this has emanated from God, who alone is its supreme cause. It is therefore that the Lord refers to Himself as the father and mother of the universe. He holds the universe in a fraction of His being (X. 42), and it is He who awards to each the fruit of his actions; hence the Lord calls Himself the sustainer of the universe. Again, because He Himself is the progenitor of Brahmā and the other Prajāpatīs (gods and Ṛṣīs presiding over creation) who carry on the actual work of creation, therefore the Lord speaks of Himself as the 'grandfather' of the universe.

That which is worth knowing is called 'Vedya'. God alone is the one supreme Truth knowable through all the Vedas (XV). It is therefore that the Lord declares Himself as the 'one worth knowing'.

That which is pure itself, and easily purifies others by wiping out their sins, is called 'Pavitra'. God is supremely holy; and His very sight, talk with Him, and the mere thought of Him go to make one exceedingly pure. Moreover, all that

is purifying in this world, viz., the practice of Japa or muttering of a sacred formula, austerities, sacred vows and holy places etc., is the very self of God; nay, the purificatory virtue possessed by these has also been derived from God. All this is sought to be conveyed by the Lord when He calls Himself 'Pavitra' or the Purifier.

The sacred syllable 'OM' is an appellation of God; it is also known by the name of 'Prajāva' (the ever new). Verse 13 of Chapter VIII has referred to it as Brahma and advocated its recitation. It is in order to reveal the identity of the Name with the object signified, that the Lord says in this verse, "I am the sacred syllable OM."

The Vedas have been revealed by God, and our knowledge of God is derived from them; it is therefore that the Lord declares the three Vedas—R̥k, Sāma and Yajus as identical with Himself.

The indeclinable 'Cha' has been used to conjoin or synthesize all the ideas expressed in this verse; and the word 'Eva' is intended to negative the existence of anything else than God. The idea is that everything mentioned in this verse is identical with God, and that nothing exists apart from God.

गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत् ।

प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम् ॥ १८ ॥

गतिः the supreme goal; भर्ता supporter; प्रभुः lord; साक्षी witness; निवासः abode; शरणम् shelter; सुहृत् a well-wisher seeking no return; प्रभवः origin; प्रलयः end; स्थानम् resting-place; निधानम् store-house; अव्ययम् बीजम् (and) imperishable seed (am I).

I am the supreme goal, supporter, lord, witness, abode, refuge, well-wisher seeking no return, origin and end, resting-place, store-house (to which all beings return at the time of universal destruction), and imperishable seed. (18)

A thing which is worth attaining is indicated by the term 'Gati'. The highest object worth attaining in the form of the eternal abode is God; it is therefore that the Lord calls Himself by the term 'Gati' or goal. The terms 'Parā Gati' or 'Paramā Gati' (supreme Goal or supreme State) and 'Avināśi Pada' (Eternal State), also indicate the same state.

He who supports or maintains is called 'Bhartā'. The protector and supporter of the whole world is God Himself; hence the Lord speaks of Himself in this verse as 'Bhartā' or supporter.

A master, who rules, is known by the term 'Prabhu'. God alone is the supreme ruler of all. He is the great lord of all lords, the supreme deity of all deities, the supreme Master of masters, the Lord of all the worlds and the supreme God, the highest object of worship (*Śweta. Up.* VI. 7). It is through fear of Him that the sun-god, the god of fire, Indra (the lord of paradise), the wind-god, the god of death and all other gods carry on their respective functions (*Kaṭha. Up.* II. iii. 3.). It is therefore that the Lord refers to Himself as 'Prabhu' or lord.

God is the knower and seer of all the worlds, of all embodied beings and of all their doings, good, bad or indifferent. There is not a single action of any kind whatsoever, belonging to the past, present or future, which can escape the eye of God. The degree of omniscience possessed by Him is unequalled. His omniscience is *par excellence*. It is therefore that the Lord declares Himself to be the 'witness'.

A place of abode is called 'Nivāsaḥ'. It is in God alone that all beings dwell

at every time and under every circumstance, no matter whether they are on their legs or at rest, standing or sitting, awake or asleep, being born in this world or giving up the ghost. Hence the Lord speaks of Himself as the 'Nivāsa' or Abode.

One under whom shelter is taken is referred to as 'Śaraṇam' or refuge. God is unequalled in His love for those who take shelter under Him, in his solicitude for the protection of the suppliant, and in his anxiety to alleviate the suffering of those who seek His protection. In the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the Lord says:—

"I grant him security from all, who surrenders himself to Me even once saying, 'I am Thine,' and seeks My protection; such is my vow."\* (VI. 18. 33.)

It is therefore that the Lord refers to Himself as 'Śaraṇam' or refuge.

A kind-hearted and loving person who is naturally and gratuitously solicitous for the welfare of another, and actually does good to others without expecting any return, is known as a 'Suhṛd' or disinterested friend. God is the motiveless benefactor, the supreme well-wisher, and the greatest and most loving friend of all living beings; it is therefore that the Lord calls Himself a 'Suhṛd' or disinterested friend. In the concluding verse of Chapter V as well the Lord similarly said, "Having known Me as the disinterested friend of all living beings, My devotee attains supreme peace." (V. 29.)

The creation, maintenance and destruction of this universe are carried on by the mere will of God. It is therefore that

\* सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवासीति च याचते । अमयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद्गतं मम ॥

the Lord declares Himself to be the origin and end, as well as the resting-place.

A place where things are stored for a long time is called a 'Nidhāna' or store-house. During the Final Dissolution Nature in her unmanifest state with all embodied beings lies dormant for a considerable length of time in a fraction of God as a deposit. It is therefore that the Lord speaks of Himself as the 'Nidhāna' or store-house.

That which knows no destruction or decay, and never ceases to be, is called 'Avyaya' or imperishable. God is the imperishable cause of all sentient and insentient beings. All beings emanate from Him; He is the ultimate substratum of all. It is therefore that the Lord calls Himself the 'imperishable seed'. In VII. 10, He similarly declares Himself to be the 'eternal seed of all beings', and again

in X. 39 He calls Himself 'the seed of all beings'.

Although the word 'Aham' (I) has been repeated with every object mentioned in verse 16 and has been employed at least once in verse 17 as well, the Lord does not use it even once in the present verse. The reason is not far to seek. Words like 'Kratu', 'Yajña', 'Swadhā', 'Anṣadha', 'Mantra', 'Ājya', 'Ṛk', 'Yajus' etc., used in the preceding verses, are naturally such as denote objects other than God. Therefore, in order to show His identity with those things, the Lord used the word 'Aham' (I) in connection with them. All the words occurring in the present verse, however, are attributes of God; moreover, the word 'Aham' used in the preceding verse is connected with this verse as well. Therefore, it was unnecessary to repeat the word 'Aham' in the present verse.

तपाम्यहमहं वर्षं निगृह्णाम्युत्सृजामि च ।

अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च सदसच्चाहमर्जुन ॥ १९ ॥

अहम् I (Myself); तपामि radiate heat (as the sun); वर्षम् rainfall; निगृह्णामि hold back; च as well as; उत्सृजामि send forth; अर्जुन O Arjuna; अहम् I (Myself); अमृतम् (am) immortality; च and; मृत्युः death; च and; सत् असत् being (as well as) non-being; च also; अहम् (am) I; एव alone.

I radiate heat as the sun, and hold back as well as send forth showers, Arjuna. I am immortality as well as death; even so I am being and non-being both.

( 19 )

By the first half of the verse the Lord indicates that the sun as well, which imparts through its rays light and heat to the world, and sucking water in the form of vapour from the ocean and other reservoirs of water, holds it in the atmosphere, and then, in due course, sends it down for the good of the world in due proportion in the form of showers, is His own Self.

'Amṛta' is that which takes one

beyond the realm of death and makes one immortal. The nectar which is said to be obtained in the heaven-world, and a drink of which renders the celestials immune from death as it is known on this earth, does not however make them absolutely proof against destruction. The supreme nectar which brings complete security from destruction is God Himself, whose realization makes one secure for all time from the scourge of death. It is therefore that the Lord speaks of Himself

as 'immortality'; and it is for this very reason that liberation from birth and death is also known as 'immortality'.

The destructive principle which makes an end of all is called 'death'. Both creation and destruction are supremely necessary for the proper functioning of the world-process, and both these acts are performed by the sportive Lord. It is He who abides in the form of Mahākāla (the supreme Spirit of Destruction) for bringing about the destruction of all the worlds when the time comes for it. The Lord Himself says in verse XI. 32: "I am the inflamed Kāla, the destroyer of the worlds." It is therefore that He declares 'death' to be His very self.

The imperishable Self, which never ceases to be, is known as 'Sat' (Being);

and all that is perishable and transient goes by the name of 'Asat' (non-being) (II. 16). It is these two categories that have been referred to in Chapter XV as the 'Akṣara' and 'Kṣara' Puruṣas, or the perishable and imperishable entities. It is these two, again, which constitute the Parā and Aparā Prakṛtis, or the higher and lower Natures of God, which are identical with God. It is therefore that the Lord declares Himself as being and non-being both.

The indeclinable 'Cha' immediately following the words 'Sat' and 'Asat' indicates that Brahma, which transcends being and non-being both (XI. 37), and which lies beyond the connotation of the words 'Sat' and 'Asat', is also identical with God.

*Describing in verses 13 to 15 the various forms of worship of both His Saguna and Nirguna aspects, the Lord brought out in verses 16 to 19 His identity with the whole universe. Now that this is established, it stands to reason that the worship of Indra and other celestials too indirectly constitutes His own worship. But those who, instead of realizing this, worship these latter gods as other than the supreme Deity and with their mind attached to the reward of such worship, fail to realize God and obtain only perishable results from such worship. In order to show this, the Lord now devotes the next two verses to a description of such worship with its fruit.*

त्रैविद्या मां सोमपाः पूतपापा यज्ञैरिष्ट्वा स्वर्गंति प्रार्थयन्ते ।

ते पुण्यमासाद्य सुरेन्द्रलोकमश्नन्ति दिव्यान्दिवि देवभोगान् ॥ २० ॥

त्रैविद्याः those who perform action with some interested motive as laid down in the three Vedas; सोमपाः those who drink the sap of the Soma plant; पूतपापाः those who have been purged of their sin; माम् Me; यज्ञैः through (the performance of) sacrifices; इष्ट्वा worshipping; स्वर्गंतिम् access to heaven; प्रार्थयन्ते aspire for; ते those (persons); पुण्यम् obtained as a reward for their meritorious deeds; सुरेन्द्रलोकम् Indra's realm or paradise; आसाद्य attaining; दिवि in heaven; दिव्यान् celestial; देवभोगान् pleasures of gods; अश्नन्ति enjoy.

Those who perform action with some interested motive as laid down in the three Vedas and drink the sap of the Soma plant, and have thus been purged of sin, worshipping Me through sacrifices, seek access to heaven;

attaining Indra's paradise as the result of their virtuous deeds, they enjoy the celestial pleasures of gods in heaven. (20)

The three Vedas called by the names of R̥k, Sāma and Yajus are collectively known as the 'Vedatrayī' or 'Trividyā'. And the word 'Traividyaḥ' refers to those who are devoted and attached to the letter of the three Vedas, i. e., to the details of sacrifices as mentioned in the three Vedas and their fruit, and are given to the performance of such sacrifices. Similarly the word 'Somapāḥ' stands for those who drink the juice of the Soma plant according to the rules laid down in the scriptures for the potation of such juice in the course of sacrifices. Even so those who have been purged of sins that stand as an impediment to the attainment of heaven, through the proper performance of such Vedic rituals, are referred to here by the word 'Pūtapāpāḥ'. All these terms refer to that class of men who are ignorant of the universal form of God, who are devoted to and fond of the Vedic ritual and avoiding sinful acts habitually perform acts of sacrifice with an interested motive and in accordance with the scriptural injunctions.

The word 'Pūtapāpāḥ' cannot be taken to mean those whose sins have been completely washed away. For the next verse speaks of their returning to the world of mortals on the exhaustion of the stock of their merits. Had all their sins been eradicated, they ought to have attained liberation the very moment their stock of merits got exhausted. For when the stock of both sin and virtue has been exhausted, no more cause for rebirth remains. Under such circumstances no question of rebirth should arise in their case. But the next verse definitely states that they return to this world; therefore,

the interpretation of the word given above seems to be quite correct.

The word 'Mām' in this verse stands for Indra and other celestials, who constitute the limbs of God. Worshipping these gods with faith through sacrificial performances and other forms of worship according to the procedure laid down in the scriptures is what is meant by 'worshipping Me through sacrifices'. The intention of the Lord is to show that Indra and the other gods being His own limbs, worship offered to them indirectly constitutes His own worship. But due to ignorance, men who are prompted by interested motives do not recognize this truth. That is why they fail to realize God.

Attainment of heaven is called 'Swargati'. Worshipping the gods through Vedic rituals and praying to them for granting an abode in heaven is what is meant by 'seeking access to heaven'.

The word 'Surendralokam', with the adjective 'Punyaṃ' qualifying it, has been used to indicate all the celestial worlds, from the abode of Indra or the third heaven to the abode of Brahmā or the seventh heaven, that are attained as the fruit of meritorious deeds like the performance of sacrifices etc. Though strictly speaking it refers to the abode of Indra only, it should therefore be understood to cover here all the worlds stated above. Reaching those worlds as a reward for their meritorious deeds, and tasting both through their mind and senses the pleasures of the gods, which cannot be obtained on earth, is what is meant by 'enjoying the heavenly pleasures of gods'.

ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ।

एवं त्रयीधर्ममनुप्रपन्ना गतागतं कामकामा लभन्ते ॥ २१ ॥

ते they; तम् that; विशालम् extensive; स्वर्गलोकम् heaven-world; भुक्त्वा having

enjoyed; पुण्ये क्षीणे on ( the stock of ) their merit being exhausted; मर्त्यलोकम् the world of mortals; विशन्ति return to; एवम् thus; त्रयीधर्मम् the ritual ( with interested motive ) recommended by the three Vedas ( as leading to heaven ); अनुप्रपन्नाः devoted to; कामकामाः those seeking ( worldly ) enjoyments; गतागतम् ऊभन्ते repeatedly come and go ( i. e., ascend to heaven by virtue of their merits and return to earth when their fruit has been enjoyed ).

Having enjoyed the extensive heaven-world, they return to this world of mortals on the stock of their merits being exhausted. Thus devoted to the ritual with interested motive recommended by the three Vedas ( as the means of attaining heavenly bliss ), and seeking worldly enjoyments, they repeatedly come and go ( i. e., ascend to heaven by virtue of their merits and return to earth when their fruit has been enjoyed ). ( 21 )

In comparison with the terrestrial world the dimensions of the celestial regions, the extent and variety of the enjoyments obtained there, the degree of their pleasurable-ness, the bodily and mental capacity to enjoy them and the highest limit of longevity reached there, are all immeasurably larger and longer. It is in this sense that the heaven-world has been spoken of as 'extensive'.

When the fruit of the merits, for the enjoyment of which one goes to heaven, has been enjoyed, it is said that the stock of one's merits has got exhausted. And as soon as the stock of such merits is exhausted the Jīva who once possessed them is hurled back to the mortal world to enjoy the fruit of his remaining virtues and sins. This is what is meant by his 'returning to this mortal world'.

The word 'Trayīdharmam' stands for the aggregate of ritual acts recommended

in the three Vedas—R̥k, Yajus and Sāma—as a means to the attainment of heaven. Duly observing such practices, and regarding the enjoyments of heaven as the highest object of life, is what is meant by being devoted to 'Trayīdharmam'.

Men with an interested motive, who are ignorant of the truth about God, fail to surrender themselves to God with an undivided mind, and swayed by their desire for enjoyment take recourse to the form of Dharma stated above. It is therefore that the fruit of their actions is transitory, and it is for this reason that they have to return to the mortal world. But those, who having given up dependence on these practices, leading to the enjoyments of heaven, take refuge in God and God alone, succeed in realizing Him and thereby attain complete freedom from all forms of bondage. It is therefore that these men, having accomplished the object of their life, are never born in this world again.

*In verses 13 and 14, the Lord described the mode of devotion practised by loving devotees who possess a knowledge of His imperishable Self. In verse 15 while referring to the worship of the Absolute through the practice of Jñānayoga, as well as to the worship, carried on in other ways, of celestials like the sun-god, the moon-god, the gods of fire etc., who are so many limbs as it were of God in His Universal Form, He pointed out that such worship also constituted His*



worship. Thereafter, in verses 16 to 19 He showed that He was manifested not only in the form of those celestials, but also in the form of all the materials with which worship is offered to Him, and that He is the father, mother, grandfather, sustainer and ruler of the universe. Not only that, He is being and non-being both. Showing thus the universal character of His Self, He declared in verses 20 and 21 that those who worship Him in the form of the celestials with some interested motive, recognizing the separate existence of gods, are virtuous men no doubt, but that having tasted the enjoyments in heaven they have to return to the mortal world, and cannot attain His imperishable state. He now declares the fruit of devotion practised by devotees who have already been referred to in verses 13 and 14, and which could not be stated owing to the insertion of other topics.

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ २२ ॥

ये who; अनन्याः loving none else; जनाः devotees; माम् Me ( the supreme Deity ); चिन्तयन्तः ( constantly ) dwelling on; पर्युपासते worship in a disinterested spirit; तेषाम् नित्याभियुक्तानाम् of those ever united in thought ( with Me ); योगक्षेमम् supplying needs and safeguarding interests; अहम् I; वहामि arrange.

The devotees, however, who loving no one else constantly think of Me, and worship Me in a disinterested spirit, to those ever united in thought with Me, I bring full security and personally attend to their needs. ( 22 )

The word 'Ananyāḥ' refers to those faithful devotees who having withdrawn their attachment from all forms of enjoyment of the world have bestowed their love unshakably and irrevocably on God and God alone, to whom separation from God is quite unbearable, who acknowledge no other deity than God, and who recognize God alone as their supreme asylum, supreme goal and supreme object of love.

The word 'Mām' ( Me ) in this verse stands for God with attributes, or the Supreme Person (Puruṣottama) as the Gītā calls Him. Realizing His virtues, glory, truth and secret, and thinking of Him constantly without any break even while walking or moving about, standing or sitting, awake or asleep, or while practising meditation in seclusion, he who carries on all his activities in a

disinterested spirit as a behest from God and for His pleasure is said to 'worship Him while constantly thinking of Him'.

'Yoga' means obtaining what is unobtainable; while 'Kṣema' indicates the preservation of what has been already obtained. Ensuring his protection against all possible odds and risks and preserving whatever materials or resources necessary for God-Realization are already acquired by the devotee and supplying his further needs in that direction, the Lord brings him face to face with His reality. This is what is meant by 'carrying on the Yoga-kṣema of His devotees'. The life of Prahlāda serves as a beautiful illustration of this truth. Even though his father, Hiranyakaśipu, placed mighty obstacles in his way, the Lord gave him protection

under every circumstance, and in the end brought him face to face with His reality.

One may ask here: Does the Lord also personally attend to the earthly needs of his devotees and protect his worldly possessions as well? It should be remembered in this connection that it is the Lord Himself who maintains and supports the numberless beings, great and small, of the whole universe. Caring little whether one adores Him or not, the Lord carries on His shoulders the entire responsibility of maintaining the whole universe with the natural feelings of highest love and affection. When such is the case, there is no wonder that He should undertake the responsibility of maintaining those who are exclusively devoted to Him. The fact is that God Himself holds the entire charge of looking after those devotees who remain constantly engaged in His thought alone, and are little concerned about anything else than God.

To take a homely illustration, a small babe who entirely depends upon its mother knows no one else than her and never worries as to which of its things should be looked after, and as to what it will need at a particular moment. It is the look-out of the mother to see which of its things should be preserved with care; it is she who foresees what will be needed for the babe at a particular moment; and it is the mother, again, who looks after its things, and makes necessary provision for it at the right moment. Even so in the case of him who is exclusively devoted to God and constantly united in thought with Him, it is God alone who determines what is needed by him and which of his worldly or spiritual possessions need be preserved; and it is He again who looks after his possessions and also supplies his needs.

So long as a child continues to be in the charge of its mother and entirely depends on her, the mother pays little heed to its judgment and does that which is conducive to its real interests. Even

so, and much more than that, God does precisely that wherein lies the real good of the devotee. It is God who determines what will be necessary for a devotee of the type mentioned above at a particular time, and what should be preserved for him; and the judgment of God is always full of blessings for the devotee. And it is God who bears the responsibility for the protection of his interests and for securing what is unobtained by him. The distinction between worldly and other-worldly interests is not the point at issue here, nor are we concerned here with the acquisition of this thing or that. One's true interest lies in the non-acquisition and non-possession of things whose acquisition or possession makes one forgetful of God and addicted to the enjoyments of the world, and which therefore really mars one's interests. Even so a devotee's real good lies in the acquisition and preservation of things whose absence or neglect interferes with the remembrance of God, and thus stands in the way of his attaining real blessedness and mars his real interests.

The statement that God Himself bears on His shoulders the responsibility of conferring true blessedness on, and serving the best interests of, the devotee, means that bearing in mind what things obtained or preserved will bring him lasting good, it is God Himself who secures or preserves such things for the devotee, no matter whether they are connected with his earthly life, or with his spiritual practice.

This should make it definitely clear that the entire responsibility even for the livelihood of the devotee who solely depends on God, and does everything with his mind constantly and exclusively engaged in His loving remembrance, and who neither craves nor depends upon, nor even thinks of anything else, lies on God. The almighty, omniscient, all-seeing God, who is the greatest friend of the devotee, looks after him in every way. Hence there can be no error in supplying his needs or

protecting his possessions, nor can His dispensation lead to any contrary result. The dispensation of God in his case brings him joy and peace, fills him with love, and is supremely helpful in bringing him face to face with God without delay. That is why the word 'Yoga' has been interpreted as meaning God-Realization, and the word 'Kṣema' as meaning preservation of the means for such Realization.

*It has been stated above that the whole responsibility in respect of the devotee who adores God with an exclusive mind is borne by God Himself. The Lord now declares that the practicers who worship other deities with some interested motive, treating them as other than the supreme Deity, worship Him with a mistaken approach.*

येऽप्यन्यदेवता भक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।

तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्यविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ २३ ॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kunti, Arjuna; अपि even ( though ); श्रद्धया with faith; अन्विताः endowed; ये भक्ताः the devotees ( with interested motives ) who; अन्यदेवताः other deities; यजन्ते worship; ते they; अपि even; माम् Me; एव alone; यजन्ति worship; अविधिपूर्वकम् ( though ) with a mistaken approach.

Arjuna, even those devotees who, endowed with faith, worship other gods ( with some interested motive ) worship Me alone, though with a mistaken approach. ( 23 )

The words 'Śraddhayā Anvitāḥ' refer to those who possess a devout and unwavering faith in the gods enumerated in the Vedas, in the worship of those gods and in the fruit of such worship in the form of attainment of heaven etc. The use of these qualifying words is intended to convey that those who worship the deities mentioned above through sacrificial performances and other such acts without faith and for mere show cannot be included in this category. They fall under the category of those who are possessed of the demoniac temperament ( XVI. 17; XVII. 13 ).

Worshipping with faith, through sacrificial and other acts recommended in the scriptures, a particular god whose worship has been enjoined in the Śāstras for the satisfaction of a particular desire,—this is what is meant by worshipping other gods. Those who fail to realize the truth that the various deities

are but limbs of the one supreme Deity, who is the Lord of all, and that really speaking it is God who is manifested in the form of those deities, and who worship them with some interested motive, treating them as other than God, are said to 'worship God with a mistaken approach'.

On the other hand, those who worship the various deities with reverence in a disinterested spirit and in accordance with the procedure laid down in the scriptures with the motive of God-Realization, treating them as so many manifestations of the supreme Deity, inasmuch as they are all limbs of the supreme Being, are said to worship God in the right spirit through the worship of those deities. The fruit of such worship is also God-Realization.

Treating even strangers as manifestations of God, King Rantideva served them with food, enduring the pangs of

hunger himself, and thus offered disinterested worship to God. As the fruit of such worship, he succeeded in realizing God. Similarly, whosoever offers service to the celestials, one's preceptor, the Brahman, a guest, a stranger, one's parents and all other beings for the pleasure of God and as a behest from God, treating them as identical with Him really serves God in the right spirit through that service, and the fruit of such service is also God-Realization.

He who duly worships the other deities with faith and love, though with

some interested motive, without realizing the above truth, really worships God alone; for it is God alone who is the enjoyer of all sacrifices and the supreme Lord of all, and because it is He who is manifested in every form. Nevertheless, lacking as it does in the right spirit, such worship is not recognized as the right method of worshipping God. It is for this reason that instead of bringing God-Realization in its wake, such worship brings only the enjoyments of heaven as its fruit. This vast difference in the concomitant result is brought about due to ignorance about the reality of God.

*Showing thus that the worshippers of other deities worship Him with a mistaken approach, the Lord now explains why such worshippers fail to realize God.*

अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च ।

न तु मामभिजानन्ति तत्त्वेनातश्च्यवन्ति ते ॥ २४ ॥

हि because; सर्वयज्ञानाम् of all sacrifices; भोक्ता the enjoyer; च and; प्रभुः the lord; च as well; अहम् ( am ) I; एव alone; तु but; ते they; माम् Me ( the supreme Deity ); तत्त्वेन in reality; न not; अभिजानन्ति know; अतः hence; च्यवन्ति fall ( are subjected to rebirth ).

For I am the enjoyer and also the lord of all sacrifices; but they know Me not in reality ( as the supreme Deity ), hence they fall ( i.e., return to life on earth ). ( 24 )

Inasmuch as it is God Himself who is manifested in the form of this universe, the various gods, who are recognized as the enjoyers of the different rituals in the form of sacrifice, worship and so on, are so many limbs of God, and God Himself is the soul of them all ( X. 20 ). Therefore, it is God Himself who enjoys the various sacrifices and other sacred rites. It is God Himself who creates, sustains and destroys the whole universe through His power of Yoga, and duly regulates all. He is the ruler of Indra ( the lord of paradise ), Varuṇa ( the god of water ), Yama ( the god of death ), Prajāpati ( the deity presiding over creation ), and, all

other regional lords and celestials. Hence He is the supreme Lord of all created beings ( V. 29 ).

The indeclinable 'Tu' has been used here to denote antithesis. It is intended to emphasize the colossal ignorance of those who fail to recognize the glory of God notwithstanding His being the enjoyer of all sacrifices and the supreme Lord of all.

The word 'Te' ( they ) refers to men with interested motives who worship God, though with a mistaken approach, through worship of the celestials as described in the preceding verse. And failure to re-

cognize God as the enjoyer of all sacrifices and the supreme Lord of all the worlds, due to ignorance about His reality combined with His virtues and glory as described in verses 16 to 19 above, is what is meant by 'not knowing Him in reality'.

The word 'Atah' is indicative of cause. The use of the verb 'Chyavanti'

with it shows that due to the cause mentioned above, that is, due to want of knowledge about the truth of God, the worshippers of gods referred to above fail to attain the highest fruit in the form of God-Realization, and gaining the comparatively insignificant reward in the shape of enjoyments of heaven remain tied to the whirligig of births and deaths.

*The devotees of God are no longer subject to birth and death, whereas the worshippers of other deities remain subject to this law. What is the reason for this? Anticipating this query the Lord now says:—*

यान्ति देवव्रता देवान् पितॄन् यान्ति पितृव्रताः ।

भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम् ॥ २५ ॥

देवव्रताः those who are vowed to the gods; देवान् to the gods; यान्ति go; पितृव्रताः those who are vowed to the manes; पितॄन् the manes; यान्ति reach; भूतेज्याः those who adore the spirits; भूतानि the spirits; यान्ति reach; मद्याजिनः (and) those who worship Me; माम् Me; अपि alone; यान्ति attain.

Those who are vowed to gods go to the gods; those who are vowed to the manes reach the manes; those who adore the spirits reach the spirits and those who worship Me come to Me alone. (That is why My devotees are no longer subject to birth and death). (25)

Worshipping the gods, observing the rules laid down for their worship, performing sacrifices in their honour, performing Japa of the Mantra sacred to them and feeding Brahmans for their propitiation, all these are known as vows for the propitiation of the Devas. Men who observe these vows are referred to here as 'Devavratāḥ'. And attaining as a reward for such worship the abode of these gods and obtaining enjoyments similar to those enjoyed by them, or attaining a celestial form resembling the form of such gods—all this is denoted by the phrase 'going to the gods'.

In III. 11 and IV. 25 worship of the gods has been declared as conducive to blessedness; whereas verses 20, 21, 24 and 25 of this chapter show that such worship leads only to the attainment of

the transient heaven-world and throws the Jiva into the whirlpool of birth and death. Though on the face of it these statements appear quite contradictory, there is really speaking no contradiction between them. The fact of the matter is that Chapters III and IV of the Gītā speak of worshipping the gods in a disinterested spirit, hence such worship has been declared to be conducive to the highest good; for worship of gods carried on in a disinterested spirit makes for purification of the heart and is thereby conducive to the highest good. But the worship of gods referred to in these verses is one that is performed with an interested motive. Hence such worship cannot be said to yield anything more than the attainment of gods. The highest reward that such worship can confer upon the worshippers is residence in the abode of

those gods till their life-time. Therefore, their return to the mortal world is inevitable.

Similarly, performing the sacred rites of Śrāddha and Tarpana (*i.e.*, offering food and water respectively) in honour of one's departed ancestors, feeding Brahmans, offering oblations to the sacred fire and performing Japa, recitation and worship for their sake and observing vows and rules of conduct enjoined by the scriptures for their propitiation—all these are included in the worship of the manes. And men who adopt these practices for the sake of the manes are referred to here as 'Pitr̥vratāḥ'. Those who perform these ritual acts with an interested motive migrate after their death to the world of the manes and assuming the form of the manes taste the enjoyments of that region. This is what is meant by 'going to the manes'. The maximum reward that one can get through these practices is to dwell in the abode of the manes till the life-time of the lords of that world. In the long run, however, one is bound to return to this world.

The verse should not be interpreted as discouraging the worship of the gods and manes. Such worship needs must be performed by all with due ceremony consistent with one's Varna or grade in society and Āśrama or stage in life. Of course, if it is done with some interested motive, it will disappear after yielding the maximum reward; if, on the other hand, it is performed by way of duty as a behest from God, and in the spirit of offering worship to Him, it be-

comes instrumental in bringing the supreme reward in the form of God-Realization. Therefore, this verse should be understood to mean that while one must perform the worship of gods and manes, an attempt should be made to cultivate the disinterested spirit with regard to such worship.

The word 'Bhūtejyāḥ' stands for those who worship ghosts and spirits duly observing the rules of such worship, offer oblations into the sacred fire or practise charity etc. with a view to propitiating the spirits. Attaining the form of such spirits and obtaining enjoyments appropriate to them is what is meant by 'going to the spirits'. The worship of ghosts and spirits is Tamasic in character, and leads only to 'unwelcome results. Therefore, one can never be encouraged to indulge in this form of worship.

The word 'Madyājinaḥ' refers to those devotees who worship, adore and meditate on God with attributes, either with or without form, practise Japa of His Name, hear His glories and sing them, and adopt various other practices of devotion. And attaining His divine abode, living in close proximity with Him, assuming a divine form or absorption in Him—all this is meant by attaining God.

To say nothing of the devotee who worships God with or without form in a disinterested spirit, even he who adores Him with an interested motive attains Him. This is what is indicated by the use of the indeclinable 'Api' at the end of this verse.

*Though devotion to God confers on the devotee the highest boon in the form of God-Realization, its practice, far from being difficult, is exceptionally easy. In order to show this, the Lord says :—*

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।

तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥ २६ ॥

यः whosoever; मे to Me; भक्त्या with love; पत्रम् a leaf; पुष्पम् a flower; फलम् a fruit; तोयम् water (etc.); प्रयच्छति offers; प्रयतात्मनः by that disinterested

devotee of sinless mind; भक्त्युपहृतम् offered with love; तद् that (article); अहम् I; अस्मि partake of (with delight, appearing in person before him).

Whosoever offers to Me with love a leaf, a flower, a fruit or even water, I appear in person before that disinterested devotee of sinless mind, and delightfully partake of that article offered by him with love. (26)

By using the word 'Yah' (whosoever) in this connection, the Lord indicates that anyone and everyone can offer Him leaves, flowers, fruits, and water etc., no matter to which caste or community he belongs and whatever his Āśrama or stage in life. The Lord does not discriminate between one individual and another on the ground of physical prowess, external appearance, wealth, age, birth, merits and learning etc. The only condition is that the sentiment of the devotee who offers these things should be absolutely pure and loving like that of Vidura and Śabari, to quote two notable examples.

The mention of leaves, flowers, fruits and water as articles of worship indicates that anything which can be easily had even by an ordinary individual without any exertion or expenditure can be offered to God. Having all His desires fulfilled, God does not thirst for this thing or that. He thirsts only for love. And he who offers something to God with a heart overflowing with love and filled with gratitude to think how magnanimous it is of the Lord that He should condescend to accept with pleasure even the smallest gift from the hands of an humble creature like the offerer, offers with love.

He whose mind is pure is called a 'Prayatātmā'. By using this word, the Lord indicates that if the motive of the offerer is not pure, He does not accept the offering in any case, even if the same is offered with an outward show of extreme politeness and consists of the best articles. Declining the invitation of Duryodhana, He called on Vidura and fondly dined at his house simply because the latter had

a pure heart. He partook of the parched rice brought by Sudāmā with great relish, satiated the whole universe by putting into His mouth a stray leaf left in the cooking utensil of Draupadī, accepted with His own lotus hands the flower offered by the famous elephant figuring in the Purāṇas, appearing in person before him, partook of the fruits offered by Śabari at her own cottage and blessed Rantideva by accepting the water offered by him. In this way He accepts with pleasure whatever offering is made by a devotee with a heart full of love.

Incidents from the life of these devotees, relevant to the subject under discussion in particular, are briefly reproduced below:—

#### VIDURA

After completing twelve years' exile in the forest and one year's incognito existence when the Pāṇḍavas demanded of Duryodhana the restoration of their kingdom, the latter gave a flat refusal. Thereupon Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself went to the Kaurava Court to negotiate on behalf of the Pāṇḍavas. To maintain an outward show of courtesy on that occasion, Duryodhana had made elaborate preparations for the reception of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. When invited to dinner, the Lord refused to dine with him. Questioned by Duryodhana as to the reason for this refusal, the Lord gave the following reply. "Meals are taken under two circumstances," He said. "Where there is love, one partakes of, with great pleasure, whatever is available in the house. Or, when one is starving, one has to fill the belly with whatever is available anywhere, regardless of the sentiment with which the food

may be served. Both these conditions are absent in the present case. You have no love in you, and I am not dying of hunger either." With these words the Lord left his royal palace and proceeded uninvited to Vidura's cottage. The good old Bhīṣma and elders like Droṇa, Kṛpa, Bāhlika and others called at Vidura's and invited the Lord to their own houses. But the Lord refused to go anywhere else, and blessed Vidura by partaking of the dishes offered by him with the utmost love (*vide Mahābhārata, Udyoga Parva, 91*). So runs the popular Indian song:—

"Refusing the rich dishes of Duryodhana, the Lord partook of boiled vegetables at Vidura's."

#### SUDĀMĀ

Sudāmā had been a school-fellow of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Both had received their schooling at Ujjain under a common teacher Sāndīpani. Sudāmā was well-versed in the Vedas, averse to worldly enjoyments, calm and collected and a man of exemplary self-restraint. After completing their studies the two friends parted company and left for their respective homes.

Sudāmā was extremely indigent and poor so far as material possessions are concerned. On a certain occasion this Brahman with his family had to starve continuously for a number of days due to want of food. Emaciated by starvation, the wife of Sudāmā was extremely moved by the miserable plight of her children. She knew that the Lord of Dwārakā, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, was a friend of her husband. After a good deal of hesitation, therefore, and trembling with fear, she described her sufferings to her husband and requested him to proceed to Dwārakā. She knew equally well that her husband was absolutely disinterested; therefore she added, "My lord, I know you have no craving for riches; but without money it is very difficult to maintain a household, therefore, in my opinion, it is essential

and desirable too that you should go and see your friend."

Sudāmā understood that unnerved by her privations his wife was anxious to send him to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in search of wealth. He, however, had serious misgivings in approaching his friend with such a request, and reproached her saying, "Good heavens! Are you so mad as to send me to Dwārakā to fetch money? Does a true Brahman ever crave for wealth? Our only concern is to remember the Lord under all circumstances. When oppressed by hunger, can we not go out and beg our food?"

"All this is very well," said Sudāmā's wife; "but the days are so hard that one cannot even depend on the charity of others. Just have a look at my tattered clothes and these starving children of yours. I have no craving for wealth. I do not insist that you should ask Him for a kingdom, or for abundant riches. In our present stricken condition, you should only go and see Him once." Hesitating for a long time Sudāmā at last decided to go; for he thought that would afford him a golden opportunity to obtain the rare sight of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. But how could he go without taking some present for his friend? "O blessed lady," he said to his wife, "If you have anything in the house worthy of being presented to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, please let me have it." Sudāmā's request was quite reasonable; but the poor woman was helpless. There was not a single grain of rice in the house. Sudāmā's wife, therefore, kept quiet. But she knew her husband would not leave his house unless he was provided with something. Therefore, with great diffidence she approached her next-door neighbour. Although she had little hope from her, the lady of the house was good enough to lend her four handfuls of parched rice. Tying these few handfuls of rice in a dirty piece of tattered cloth, the poor woman handed it over to her husband as a present for Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.



Sudāmā reached the city of Dwārakā after a long and tiresome journey. After repeated enquiries, he at last found himself at the portals of the right royal mansion of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The poet Narottama gives in Hindi a beautiful word-picture of what followed. According to him, the porter received the stranger kindly and offering him a seat at the gate, the former went into the presence of the Lord and gave Him the following report:—

"My Lord, a stranger waits at the door;  
From where he hails, no one knows.  
No turban on his head, nor garment  
on his person;  
His loin-cloth is torn, the toga poor;  
No shoes he has to cover his feet.  
The poor, emaciated Brahman that  
he appears to be  
Came and stood at the gate,  
Looking at the beauty of the city  
with wondering eyes.  
The abode of the destitutes' friend  
he enquires about,  
And calls himself Sudāmā."

Hearing the very name of 'Sudāmā', the Lord forgot Himself and hurriedly got up from His seat. The crown was left uncared for, the yellow robe dropped from his body, He could not find time even to put on His sandals and rushed towards the gate. Seeing the miserable plight of Sudāmā from a distance, the Lord said:—

"O friend, what a helpless condition  
you have been reduced to!"

Then the Lord noticed the network  
of thorns

Sticking at the soles of Sudāmā's feet.  
Alas! friend, what a terrible suffer-  
ing you have undergone!

Why did you not turn up here before?

Why did you waste so many days?"

At the sight of Sudāmā's destitution,  
The Ocean of Compassion wept with  
grief.

The water kept for washing the feet  
of Sudāmā was not even touched.

He washed them with His own  
profuse tears!  
(Narottama)

There was no occasion to touch the water kept in the large brazen-vessel for washing the feet of Sudāmā. Washing them with the tears of His eyes, the Lord held His friend tight to His bosom. Thereafter He took him with great attention inside His palace and seated him on His own couch. Collecting the articles of worship with His own hands, the Lord duly washed Sudāmā's feet Himself; and even though His very presence hallowed the three worlds, He bore that water on His own head. The Lord's principal consort, Śrī Rukmiṇī, also expressed her desire to wash the feet of their honoured guest. The Lord readily gave His consent saying: "Let the other queens also come and wash his feet, and sprinkling the water touched by his feet over the entire palace, let them purify the palace as well as their body and mind." Holding in one hand a vase of gold filled with water, Śrī Rukmiṇī thereupon washed Sudāmā's feet with the other.

"Lo! She whom the gods ever address  
As the Mother of the universe, and  
redeemer of the world,  
They look upon Her today washing  
the feet of a destitute."

Smearing the body of His beloved friend with an excellent quality of sandal-paste and other scented articles, such as the paste of aloe wood and saffron, and offering him incense and light, the Lord treated him to a sumptuous meal and offered him betel-leaves and pieces of nuts. Sudāmā's body was badly soiled with dust and emaciated. The veins and arteries of his body had stuck out at various places. A piece of tattered cloth covered his body. But recognizing him to be a dear friend of her Lord, Rukmiṇī, who was no other than Lakṣmī, the goddess of wealth, fondly waited with all her associates on the utterly destitute Brahman holding in her hands a fan and

a chowrie with bejewelled handles. Clasping Sudāmā's hands, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa began to review the charming incidents of their boyhood.

After some time, the Lord cast a loving gaze at Sudāmā, and with a smile on His lips asked him whether he had brought any present for Him. "I hold in high esteem," He added, "even the most insignificant thing lovingly offered to Me by a devotee; for I hunger for love. On the other hand, immense treasures offered by one who does not possess devotion in his heart cannot satisfy Me."

Even after this clear hint from the Lord, Sudāmā could not part with the bundle of parched rice he had so fondly brought with him. Seeing the royal grandeur and untold wealth of the Lord, he felt very shy in exhibiting that poor article. The Lord, who knows the innermost secret of all hearts, had no difficulty in divining the cause of his visit, and said to Himself, "This Brahman is a disinterested devotee and friend of Mine. He never adored Me with the motive of gaining wealth in the past, nor is he actuated by any such motive even now; that is why he is withholding from Me this present of parched rice. But he has come to Me at the request of his devoted wife; I shall accordingly confer on him that wealth (in the shape of worldly enjoyments and liberation) which is difficult of access even to the celestials."

Having thus resolved and casting a searching glance into the bundle of parched rice held tightly by Sudāmā under his arm-pit, the Lord forcibly dislodged it from its secure position. Made of an old tattered cloth, the bundle gave way, scattering the contents on the floor.

Thereupon, in accents of deep love, the Lord said:—

"O friend, this loving present brought by you affords Me supreme delight. These parched rice will satisfy Me, and (with Me) the entire universe."\*

So saying, the Lord started picking up the scattered grains of rice one by one, putting them into His mouth and masticating them. Partaking in this way of the offering lovingly brought by a devotee, the Lord gave an ocular demonstration of His incomparable love for the devotee.

Joyfully spending some days at Dwārakā in the blessed company of the Lord, Sudāmā at last returned to his home and found it totally transformed. By the sportive will of the Lord, his dilapidated cottage with a thatched roof containing many holes had given place to a palace with turrets of gold. Sudāmā accepted this as a pastime of the Lord. He said to himself, "How noble and praiseworthy it is of my divine Friend that He fulfils the desire of the seeker by bestowing on him all that he wants secretly without his knowledge. But I am no seeker of wealth. My one repeated prayer is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa may continue to be my well-wisher, friend and loving companion in all my lives, and I may remain exclusively devoted to Him. I have no craving for this wealth. What I care for is the purest form of devotion to the Lord, who is the repository of all virtues, and the blessed company of His devotees. It is an act of Grace on His part that He withholds wealth from us, for the pride of wealth brings about one's downfall. It is therefore that He does not confer worldly possessions, kingdom and supremacy on His short-sighted devotees."

Sudāmā lived as a householder throughout his life, though he had no attachment for anything, and devoted all his time to the practice of adoration.

\* नन्वेतदुपनीतं मे परमप्रीणनं सखे । तर्पयन्त्यङ्ग मां विश्वमेते पृथुकतण्डुलाः ॥

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatā X. lxxi. 9)

## DRAUPADI

During their exile in the forest, the Pāṇḍavas were passing their period of privation and suffering; while the vile Duryodhana and his evil-minded associates, due to their inherent wickedness, were busy devising means for their extirpation. On a certain occasion, Duryodhana propitiated the sage Durvāsā by his services and asked for a boon. He said, "My elder cousin, the high-souled Yudhiṣṭhira, who is noted for his piety, is living in the forest with his brothers. Kindly accept his hospitality one day with all your pupils, ten thousand in number. I would, however, pray that you should call on him at a time when all have dined and when the blessed Draupadi has finished her meal and may be peacefully enjoying her day's rest." Acting under the advice of his designing ministers, Duryodhana thought that after Draupadi had taken her meal, the cooking utensil granted to her by the Sun-god could yield no more food. He thought that would excite the wrath of the irascible ascetic, who would reduce the Pāṇḍavas to ashes by his curse, and the object for gaining which Duryodhana had been taking so much pains would thus be easily achieved. Durvāsā, who possessed a guileless heart, could not make out the real motive of Duryodhana's request; he, therefore, readily granted it. Accordingly, one day, Durvāsā appeared in the Kāmyaka forest. Having had their meals, the Pāṇḍavas and their consort Draupadi were sitting at ease and chatting, when Durvāsā made his appearance with his battalion of ten thousand pupils. Yudhiṣṭhira and his four brothers rose from their seats to receive the honoured guest, and after paying their respects to him invited him to take his meal. Accepting their invitation, Durvāsā went to the river for a bath. Draupadi, however, felt much

disturbed. But who could save her from an awkward predicament like the one in which she found herself except her dear friend, Śrī Kṛṣṇa? Remembering the Lord, she said, "O Kṛṣṇa, O Divine Cowherd, O Refuge of the forlorn, O befriender of the refugee, You alone can rescue me from this calamity."

"Just as You delivered me the other day from the clutches of Duṣṣāsana in an open assembly, even so You should extricate me from this difficulty."\*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa happened to be with Rukmiṇī at that time in His palace at Dwārakā. Hearing the prayer of Draupadi, and knowing her to be in distress, the blessed Lord, who is so fond of His devotees, immediately left Rukmiṇī's side and ran post haste to meet Draupadi. The rapidity of motion of the Supreme Lord cannot be conceived by the human mind; there could, therefore, be no delay in His reaching the Kāmyaka forest. In a moment He was with Draupadi. Draupadi felt as if life had returned to her lifeless body. Greeting the Lord, she described to Him the predicament with which she was faced. "Tell Me all this afterwards," the Lord retorted, "I am terribly hungry; first, give Me something to eat." "I remembered You, my beloved Lord, only because of my difficulty in procuring food. I have finished my meal, and there is nothing left in that vessel," rejoined Draupadi. The Lord, who is very jovial, could not be easily satisfied. He said:—

"Draupadi, I am oppressed by hunger and fatigue. I can brook no jest now. Make haste, bring the vessel presented to you by the sun-god, and show it to Me."†

Draupadi could not resist His entreaty any more. She brought the vessel and placed it before the Lord. The Lord's

\* दुःशासनादहं पूर्वं समार्यां मोचिता यथा । तत्रैव

संकटादस्मान्मायुर्दत्तुमिहाहंसि ॥

( Mahā. Vana. 263. 15 )

† दृष्ट्वा न नर्मकलोऽयं क्षुच्छमेणातुरे भवि । शीघ्रं गच्छ मम स्थालीमानयित्वा प्रदर्शय ॥

( Mahā. Vana. 263. 23 )

## Partaking of the Devotee's offerings



"Whoever offers to Me with love a leaf, a flower, a fruit or even water, I appear in person before that disinterested devotee of sinless mind, and delightfully partake of that article offered by him with love."

penetrating vision discovered a vegetable leaf sticking somewhere in the vessel. "Draupadī," He said, "You told Me there was nothing in the vessel; but this single leaf is enough to satisfy all the three worlds!" The Lord, who is the enjoyer of all sacrifices, immediately took out the leaf and putting it into His mouth said:—

"Let God, who is the soul of the universe and enjoyer of sacrifices, derive satisfaction from this leaf."\*

At the same time He asked Sahadeva to go and fetch the Ṛṣis for dinner.

Meantime a strange thing happened on the riverside. The ascetics had hardly finished their Sandhyā (evening prayer) when they felt that their stomach had become suddenly loaded, and they began to belch. The pupils approached their preceptor and said, "Sir, we feel as if our stomach has been loaded up to the very throat. How shall we do justice to the invitation of the Pāṇḍavas?" Durvāsā, who was going through the same strange experience himself, at once replied, "Dear ones, let us leave this place immediately. The Pāṇḍavas are extremely pious and learned, and men of great moral stamina; and they are exclusively devoted to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They can reduce us to ashes, if they take it into their head, even as a flame reduces a heap of cotton to ashes. My experience with Ambariṣa is still fresh in my memory, and I am terribly afraid of the devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa." Hearing these words from the lips of Durvāsā, his pupils immediately dispersed and ran away in different directions. Sahadeva found none present on the river bank.

"Now let Me return to Dwārakā," said Śrī Kṛṣṇa to the Pāṇḍavas; "you are all

virtuous souls. Those who are constantly devoted to virtuous conduct never suffer."†

### THE LORD OF ELEPHANTS

The great tusker figuring in the Purāṇas lived on the Trikūṭa hill. Oppressed by the summer heat, he once reached the bank of a beautiful and extensive lake in the garden of Varuṇa (the god of water), called R̥tumān, accompanied by a number of male and female elephants. He rushed into the lake and, having quaffed its sweet ambrosial water to his heart's content, began to sport in it with his female companions and their youngs. In that lake lived an alligator possessed of inordinate strength, who got hold of one of the feet of the lord of elephants. Exerting all his strength the latter tried to disengage his foot from the alligator's mortal grip, but without success. The alligator now began to drag the elephant into deep waters. All the male and female companions of the elephant tried hard to rescue their chief, joining trunk with trunk, and pulling the elephant in the direction of the bank; but in vain. The tug-of-war continued for a long time. Losing all hope, the lord of elephants at last sought refuge with the Lord. He said:—

"Like a mighty serpent, possessed of terrible speed, Death pursues all in every direction. God undoubtedly protects him who is afraid of this monster and seeks His protection from it. I, therefore, take refuge in Him; for it is out of His fear that this monster runs hither and thither in pursuit of mortals. (Śrīmad Bhāgavata VIII. ii. 33)‡

The lord of elephants mentally offered a beautiful prayer to God. His cry of anguish reached the ears of the Lord, who got impatient to save His devotee. A poet

\* विश्वात्मा प्रीयतां देवस्तुष्टश्चास्त्विति यज्ञमुक् । (Mahā. Vana. 263. 25)

† धर्मन्तियास्तु ये केचिन्न ते सीदन्ति कश्चित् । (Mahā. Vana. 263. 44)

‡ यः कश्चनेशो बलिनोऽन्तकोरगात् प्रचण्डवेगादभिधावतो भृशम् ।  
भीतं प्रपन्नं परिपाति यज्ञयान्मृत्युः प्रधाक्त्वरणं तमीमहि ॥

has depicted the incident very beautifully in the following words:—

"In order to rescue the lord of elephants caught in the deadly grip of the alligator Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa left His couch in nervous haste without caring for His attendants, unmindful of the Kaustubha gem, shouting for His club even before leaving the bed, without even looking at His Consort, Lakṣmī, and mounting the back of Garuḍa even without spreading anything on it. May He protect us!"\*

Riding on Garuḍa, the Lord reached the place of occurrence in no time. The Lord of elephants saw Him in the air mounted on the back of Garuḍa, and holding aloft a lotus with his trunk said in a sinking voice in extreme agony, "O Nārāyaṇa, O Supreme Master, I offer obeisance to You."

The Lord accepted the lotus offered by the devotee with love, and severing the head of the alligator with His circular weapon, Sudarśana, delivered the tusker from a great peril.

### ŚABARĪ

Śabari was a Bhil woman. Though low-born, she was a great devotee of the Lord. She had spent a large part of her life in rendering secret services to the sages living in the Daṇḍaka forest. Sweeping the track through which the sages passed for their daily bath, covering plots with a rugged surface with sand, cutting wood from the forest and piling it up in the hermitage—these were the self-imposed duties she had adopted by way of her daily routine. A sage, Matanga by name, took pity on her, imparted the holy name to her, and while departing for the abode of Brahmā told her that Bhagavān Śrī Rāma would grace her with a visit to her cottage and that His very sight would fulfil the object of her life.

Till then he asked her to remain at that place in expectation of that auspicious moment, keeping herself engaged in the practice of adoration.

Śabari's mind got addicted to Bhajana, and she began to spend her days in anxious expectation of Śrī Rāma's visit. Her expectancy began to grow in intensity as the days rolled on. Expecting the Lord every moment, and fearing lest thorns might prick the soles of His feet, she would every now and then go and sweep the track leading to her cottage up to a long distance and sprinkle it with water. She would plaster the courtyard with cow-dung and mud and prepare a beautiful dais of cow-dung and earth for the Lord to sit on. Resorting to the woods she would pluck the most delicious fruits available there and keep them in cups made of leaves. She would repeat this process from day to day. There was no knowing how many times in the course of a day she swept the path, plastered the courtyard, prepared seats and plucked fruits. At last, one day, the Lord visited Śabari's cottage. Śabari's joy knew no bounds. It will not be out of place to reproduce in this connection the scene as depicted in the *Rāmacharitamānasa* of Goswami Tulasidas:—

"Finding Śrī Rāma in her cottage, the heart of Śabari gladdened; she rejoiced to find sage Matanga's prediction come true. He had lotus-like eyes, unusually long arms, a crown of matted hair on His head, and a garland of sylvan flowers on His bosom. Seeing Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, who were distinguishable by their swarthy and white complexion respectively, Śabari fell prostrate on the ground encircling their feet within her arms. Overwhelmed with love, she found herself tongue-tied. Again and again she bowed her head at Their lotus feet."

Śabari then worshipped the Lord and

\* पर्यङ्कं विसृजन् गणानगणयन् भूषामणिं विसरन्तुत्तानोऽपि गदा गदेति निगदन् पश्यामनालोकयन् ।  
निर्गच्छन्नपरिच्छदं खगपतिं चारोहमाणोऽवतु ग्राह्यस्तमतङ्गपुङ्गवसमुद्धाराय नारायणः ॥

placed fruits before Him. Praising her devotion in highest terms, the Lord accepted her worship and conferred the highest blessing on her by partaking of the fruits lovingly offered by her. The poet Tulasidas depicts in glowing terms how much the Lord relished those fruits. He says:—

“Wherever the Lord was ever entertained, whether at His own home, at the preceptor's residence, at a friend's house or even at His father-in-law's, nowhere and at no time did He enjoy the dishes so well, nor did He find them as delicious as the fruits of Śabarī. This is what He explicitly acknowledged on every such occasion.”\*

#### RANTIDEVA

King Rantideva was the son of King Sankṛti. A powerful ruler, Rantideva was extremely compassionate by nature. Observing the woes and sufferings of the poor, he gave away all he possessed in charity. Having been thus reduced to straits, he could maintain himself and his family with great difficulty. Even in that state he gave away to the poor whatever he got, and remained without food himself. Reduced to utter destitution, the king thus led a life of extreme misery with all the members of his family.

On a certain occasion the king had to go without food and water for full forty-eight days. Oppressed by hunger and thirst, his limbs began to tremble. On the morning of the forty-ninth day he got some ghee, rice boiled in milk, porridge and water. Forty-eight days' complete fast had rendered the king and his family extremely weak. The limbs of all were shaking.

When Rantideva was about to partake of this food, a Brahman who was quite unknown to him appeared on the scene. Out of a crore it is very easy to give

away a lakh of rupees in charity for name's sake; but it is most difficult for a starving person to part with his food. The great devotee Rantideva, however, who saw God present everywhere, gave away a share of his food to the Brahman with due respect and reverence. Satisfied with the king's hospitality, the Brahman went away.

After entertaining the Brahman, the king was about to share the remaining food with his family, when another stranger belonging to the Śūdra class made his appearance. With the thought of Śrī Hari foremost in his mind, the king gave away a part of this food to that destitute. Meanwhile a third stranger appeared with a number of dogs and begged food for himself and his dogs on the plea of hunger.

The devout king received this stranger also with due attention and, reverentially placing the whole of the remaining food at the disposal of the new comer and his dogs, bowed to him.

There was now left only a small quantity of water barely enough to appease the thirst of a single individual. The king was about to quaff it, when an outcast appeared before him and made the following submission in a pathetic tone, “O great king! I am extremely tired and exhausted. Low and impure as I am, please favour me with a little water to drink.”

Hearing this piteous appeal of the pariah, and knowing him to be really exhausted, the king was moved with great compassion, and he uttered the following nectar-like words:—

“I crave not from God the highest form of destiny with the eight superhuman faculties, nor freedom from rebirth. My only prayer is that dwelling in the heart of all beings I may undergo their suffering, so that they may be rid of all sorrow.

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\* The story of Śabarī has been adapted from the *Rāmācharitamānasa* of Goswami Tulasidas and other similar works.

"[This man is dying of thirst, and he is piteously seeking water from me in order to save his life.] By offering this life-giving drink to this humble creature who is anxious to live, my hunger, thirst, exhaustion, bodily suffering, lowness of spirit, languor, grief, depression and infatuation, all have disappeared."\* (*Śrīmad Bhāgavata* IX. xxi. 12-13)

With these words on his lips the tender-hearted king Rantideva, though half-dead himself due to thirst, reverentially and cheerfully gave the whole of that water to the pariah.

The aforesaid strangers were no other than the three lords of creation, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, who confer boons of various kinds on those who seek them, and who appeared through their delusive potency in the guise of a Brahman and others in order to test the piety of the great king Rantideva. They were supremely delighted to observe the power of endurance and depth of devotion exhibited by the king, and appeared before him in their actual form. Obtaining thus a direct vision of the three Lords all at once, the king bowed before them, but did not ask for any boon, even though called upon to do so.

For, renouncing all forms of worldly attachment and desires, the king had fixed his mind exclusively on God. In this way Rantideva, who was exclusively devoted to God, completely merged

his thoughts in God and God alone; and he being thus identified with God, the veil of Māyā, consisting of the three Guṇas, lifted like a dream from before his eyes. Due to his association the other members of his family too wholly devoted themselves to Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa, and attained the supreme state to which Yogis alone are entitled.

The use of the compound adjective 'Bhaktyupahṛtam' is intended to convey that the Lord refuses to accept things that are offered to Him with a cold heart. Where there is love, and the devotee feels genuine delight both in offering a thing to God and in its acceptance by the Lord, He not only accepts such an offering, but may even force His way into the house of such a devotee and eat things from his store, as He did in the case of the blessed Gopis of Vraja. For in reality God hungers and thirsts for love, and not for things of the world.

By the words 'Aham' and 'Aśnāmi' the Lord indicates that appearing in person before such a devotee He eats the articles offered by him with a pure and loving heart. That is to say, when He is present in the world in a human or other garb, He goes to the devotee in person, while at other times He manifests Himself before the devotee in the form desired by the devotee, and fulfils the object of his existence by eating whatever is offered to Him.

*This naturally raises the question in Arjuna's mind as to what he should do under the circumstances. Anticipating this question the Lord lays down the duty for Arjuna:—*

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।

यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥ २७ ॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kunti, Arjuna; यत् whatever; करोषि you do; यत् whatever; अश्नासि you eat; यत् whatever; जुहोषि you offer as oblation to the

\* न कामयेऽहं गतिमीश्वरात्परामर्शद्विभुक्तामपुनर्भवं वा । आर्त्तिं प्रपद्येऽखिलदेहभाजामन्तःस्थितो येन भवन्त्यदुःखाः ॥  
क्षुब्धश्चो गात्रपरिश्रमश्च दैन्यं क्लमः शोकविषादमोहाः । सर्वे निवृत्ताः कृपणस्य जन्तोर्जिजीविषोर्जीविजलार्पणान्मे ॥



sacred fire; यत् whatever; ददासि you bestow (as a gift); यत् whatever; तपस्यसि you do by way of penance; तत् (all) that; मदर्पणम् कुरुष्व offer to Me.

Arjuna, whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as oblation to the sacred fire, whatever you bestow as a gift, whatever you do by way of penance, offer it all to Me. (27)

By using the five verbs 'Karoṣi', 'Aśnāsi', 'Juhōṣi', 'Dadāsi' and 'Tapasyasi' with the pronoun 'Yat' joined to each, the Lord has enumerated in a nutshell all the duties of man. That is to say, the words 'Yat Karoṣi' cover all kinds of pursuits other than the performance of sacrifices, charity and austerity, viz., all activities carried on by man for earning his livelihood consistent with his grade in society and stage in life, social duties, and all other duties enjoined by the scriptures, such as the practice of adoration, meditation etc. Even so all activities intended to keep the body and soul together, such as taking food and drink etc., are included in 'Yat Aśnāsi'; and all practices connected with worship and the offering of oblations to fire etc. are comprised in 'Yat Juhōṣi'. Similarly all acts of charity and service are included in 'Yat Dadāsi', and all acts of self-restraint and all forms of austere penance (XVII. 14-17) are covered by 'Yat Tapasyasi'.

The common run of men identify themselves with, and feel attached to, such actions and crave for their fruit. Therefore, renouncing the feeling of identification with, and attachment for,

all actions and the craving for their fruit, the devotee should realize that the whole universe belongs to God, that his own mind, intellect, body and senses also belong to God, and he himself belongs to God, so that whatever sacrificial and other acts are performed by him also belong to Him. Nay, he should further realize that like the showman making the puppet dance, it is God alone who is getting everything done by him, and that it is God Himself who enjoys all those acts in various forms, he being a mere instrument and nothing else. And realizing this he should perform the aforesaid actions in a disinterested spirit as a behest from God and for His pleasure alone. This is what is meant by offering those actions to God.

Undertaking an action with another motive and subsequently offering it to God, offering an action to God even while performing it, offering the same to God as soon as it is completed, or offering its fruit to God—all these processes are included in the act of offering an action to God. In fact, these are the initial stages of offering one's actions to God. Total offering of actions to God as indicated in the foregoing paragraph is accomplished only by going through the above processes.

*It may be asked here: What will be the result of offering all one's actions to God in the manner stated above? Anticipating this query the Lord says:—*

शुभाशुभफलैरेवं मोक्षसे कर्मबन्धनैः ।  
संन्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि ॥ २८ ॥

एवम् thus; संन्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा with your mind established in the Yoga of Renunciation (offering of all actions to God); शुभाशुभफलैः कर्मबन्धनैः from the bonds of Karma in the shape of good and evil consequences; मोक्षसे you

अपि चेतुसुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।

साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥ ३० ॥

चेत् if; सुदुराचारः the vilest sinner; अपि even; अनन्यभाक् devoted to none else; माम् Me; भजते worships; सः he; साधुः a saint; एव verily; मन्तव्यः should be accounted; हि because; सः he; सम्यग् व्यवसितः ( has ) rightly resolved.

Even if the vilest sinner worships Me with exclusive devotion, he should be accounted a saint; for he has rightly resolved. ( He is positive in his belief that there is nothing like devoted worship of God. ) ( 30 )

The use of the indeclinable 'Api' in this verse is intended to emphasize His undifferentiating attitude towards His worshippers. That is to say, one should not wonder if men of righteous conduct and ordinary sinners should be redeemed by His worship; even the vilest sinner can be so redeemed.

The indeclinable 'Chet' has been used to indicate that men of sinful conduct do not as a rule take to His loving worship because of their attachment to worldly enjoyments and vice. Nevertheless, if through the revival of some past good tendency, or due to an atmosphere of God-consciousness, study of the scriptures or the holy association of saints, or by hearing the virtues, glory, greatness and mysteries of God a sinner develops faith in and devotion to God and takes to His adoration, he too secures redemption.

The word 'Sudurāchārah' stands for men whose conduct is most vile, who are addicted to prohibited food, drink and acts, and who, being dominated by their evil nature, bad habits and attachment for enjoyment, cannot wholly give up their immoral practices. If by hearing or reading accounts of the divine virtues and glory etc. or due to some other cause such a sinner comes to look upon God as the supreme Reality, and depending exclusively on God recognizes Him with supreme faith and love as the sole object of his worship, he is said to be exclusively devoted to Him. And being thus devoted

to God, he who dwells on His divine essence, hears, reflects on and chants His names, virtues, glory and greatness, offers obeisance to Him, worships Him with leaves, flowers and various other objects of his choice and offers his virtuous acts to Him is said to worship Him with exclusive devotion.

Such a devotee, even though desiring and striving to give up his immoral practices in toto may not be able to abandon any particular vice completely, being helplessly driven to it by his evil nature and vicious habit. Nevertheless, says the Lord, he should be looked upon as a saint and not as a wicked person. For he has arrived at the definite conclusion that God is the redeemer of the fallen, a disinterested friend of all, almighty, supremely compassionate and omniscient, the universal lord and the supreme Reality; that the highest duty of man is to worship Him; and that His adoration will not only eradicate all his sins and sinful proclivities but bring him face to face with God] as a matter of course through His grace. There can be no higher or saner resolve than this in the eyes of God, and he who makes this resolve is acknowledged by the Lord as His devotee. Nay the Lord guarantees that his devotion will soon convert him into a perfectly virtuous soul. Therefore, it is but reasonable that such a devotee should be accounted a virtuous soul rather than a sinner or an evil-minded person.

In verse 15 of Chapter VII the Lord stated that men of evil deeds do not worship Him; whereas in the present verse He states that the vilest sinner can worship Him, and thereby become a saint. Although the two statements appear as mutually contradictory, it will be found on closer examination that really speaking there is no contradiction between them. Thus it will be seen that the men of evil deeds referred to in the above verse of Chapter VII are not only addicted to sin, but they have neither faith in God nor any knowledge about Him, nor again are they keen to avoid the perpetration of sins. It is therefore that those foolish unbelievers have been characterized as 'men of deluded wisdom', 'vile among men', and 'men who have embraced the demoniac nature' etc. The sinner spoken of in the present verse, however, is one who though addicted to sin, is nonetheless anxious to avoid the

perpetration of sins. He is devoted to God's virtues, glory, essence and names, and has arrived at the definite conclusion that God, who is the only redeemer of the fallen and is supremely compassionate, is the supreme Reality; that He is the supreme object of his worship, that His adoration is the highest duty of a human being, and that through His Grace all his sins will be eradicated, and he will easily attain Him. It is therefore that he has been characterized as one who has 'rightly resolved', and who is devoted to none else than God. Adoration of God thus becomes quite natural to him. As for unbelievers, since they have no faith in God, it is hardly possible for them to take to the practice of adoration. Thus there is no contradiction whatsoever between the two statements of the Lord, both of which are correct in their own context.

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।

कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥ ३१ ॥

क्षिप्रम् speedily; भवति ( he ) becomes; धर्मात्मा virtuous; शश्वच्छान्तिम् lasting peace; निगच्छति ( and ) attains; कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; प्रतिजानीहि know ( it ) for certain; मे My; भक्तः devotee; न not; प्रणश्यति falls.

Speedily he becomes virtuous and secures lasting peace. Know it for certain, Arjuna, that My devotee never falls. ( 31 )

The devotee referred to in the preceding verse is not only freed in his very lifetime and without delay from all vices and immoral practices, but acquires the divine virtues mentioned in verses 2 and 3 of Chapter XVI, and thus becomes eligible for God-Realization. And 'lasting peace' here means peace which, once attained, is never lost, viz., peace in the shape of God-Realization, referred to as 'Naiṣṭhikī Śānti' in V. 12, 'everlasting peace, consisting of supreme bliss' in VI. 15 and as 'supreme peace' in XVIII. 62.

The verb 'Pratijānihi' is derived from

the root 'Jñā' ( to know ) with 'Prati' prefixed to it. It, therefore, means 'know it for certain' or 'vouch for it'. By using this word the Lord asks Arjuna to believe whatever He says in praise of devotees as well as of devotion as undoubtedly true, and have it indelibly impressed on his mind.

The verb 'Naśyati' with 'Pra' prefixed to it means 'undergoes a fall'. What the Lord intends to convey by the use of this word is that a devotee of God gradually rises in the scale of spiritual evolution and never suffers a fall. In other words, he neither experiences a spiritual set-back

nor meets with an evil destiny in the shape of birth in a sub-human species or tortures in hell. Gradually freed from vice and evil conduct, he soon becomes a virtuous soul and attains supreme peace.

#### BHAKTA BILVAMANGALA

As an instance in point, we may cite the example of Bilvamangala, author of the devotional poem "Śrī Kṛṣṇakārnāmṛta", who appeared only a few centuries ago. Bilvamangala was the son of a devout Brahman, Ramdas by name, who lived in a village on the bank of the Kṛṣṇavīṇa in south India. He was fairly educated, quiet in disposition, cultured and virtuous by nature; but having lost his father in early youth he fell in evil company and turned a moral rake. The house of a public woman was his favourite resort, and habitual indulgence in sins was his only occupation throughout the day. He had given his heart to a public woman, Chintāmaṇi by name. Chintāmaṇi lived on the other side of the river. Once it so happened that Bilvamangala could not visit his paramour for a whole day. It was the death anniversary of his father. Although his physical body remained confined within the four walls of his house, his mind revelled in her company throughout the day. The sun had set by the time the Śrāddha ceremony was over. Bilvamangala was now ready to depart. People tried to dissuade him on the ground that the day was sacred to the memory of his father; but he was adamant. Bilvamangala hurriedly left his home and reached the bank of the river. A fearful storm with torrential rain overtook him there. The anxious boatmen moored their boats to the bank and took shelter under the trees. The night assumed a dismal aspect. Bilvamangala pleaded hard with the boatmen to ferry him across the river, and offered them the temptation of a liberal fare; but nobody was willing to risk his life on any terms whatsoever. No risk, however, was too great for

Bilvamangala, who was bent upon visiting his sweetheart at all costs. Unmindful of consequences he jumped into the river. The corpse of a woman in an advanced stage of decomposition was drifting along the current. Due to the prevailing darkness, however, nothing could be easily distinguished. The eyes of Bilvamangala, on the other hand, were blinded by passion. He mistook the corpse for a log of wood, and clutched at it. Nothing conscious of the corpse, or of its stench, he reached the other bank by sheer good luck, and ran to Chintāmaṇi's cottage. The door was closed. But no barrier was too much for his yearning heart. He made up his mind to enter the house by scaling the wall. Groping for something to help him he seized at what appeared to him a strong rope soft as silk, but which was actually a deadly cobra, hanging with its head and neck thrust into a hole in the wall. Bilvamangala climbed the wall with the help of its tail. He was not, however, bitten by the snake. The Lord had so willed it. Entering the house he woke up Chintāmaṇi. She was, however, taken aback to see him at that odd hour. "How did you manage to cross the river during this fearful night, and enter the house?" she asked. Bilvamangala told her how he swam across the river with the help of a log of wood, and scaled the wall of the house with the help of a rope. It had now stopped raining. Chintāmaṇi came out with a light in her hand to ascertain the truth of his statement, and discovered to her consternation that the rope by which Bilvamangala had scaled the wall was no other than a deadly cobra, and that the piece of log with the help of which he had crossed the river was a stinking corpse. Bilvamangala also now saw what those things actually were and shuddered at their very sight. Chintāmaṇi now upbraided him saying "You, moral rake, you are a Brahman by birth, and the day was sacred to the memory of your father; but due to your infatuation for this bundle of mere flesh and blood you abandoned all your virtues and sacred duties and came running all the way at

this dreadful hour with the help of a corpse and a deadly snake! But the figure which you are so passionately fond of and which you regard as exceptionally attractive today will be reduced to the same condition one day in which you find the corpse lying in front of you. Fie upon this lustful propensity of yours! Had you been so enamoured of that swarthy beauty, the enchanter of all hearts, and sallied forth to meet Him with the same degree of restlessness, you would have surely attained the object of your existence by realizing Him."

The admonition of the harlot worked like a miracle. The chords of Bilvamangala's heart now responded to a new melody. The fire of wisdom blazed forth in his heart and reduced all his impurities to ashes. As soon as his heart got purged, the flood-gate of divine love was flung open, and tears began to flow in an unending stream through his eyes. Clasp- ing Chintāmaṇi's feet Bilvamangala said, "Mother, by opening my inward eye you have really blessed me. Mentally accept- ing her as his spiritual guide he bowed low at her feet. The rest of the night was spent by Chintāmaṇi singing to him the sports of love of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which made a deep impression on Bilvamangala's mind. As soon as the day broke, he left Chintāmaṇi's house as a maniac completely absorbed in the sacred thought of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the real Chintāmaṇi (the wish-yielding gem) for the whole world. The first act in the drama of Bilvamangala's life thus came to a close.

Approaching saint Somagiri, who lived on the bank of the river Kṛṣṇavinā, Bilvamangala obtained initiation into the sovereign Mantra sacred to Śrī Gopāla (the Divine Cowherd) and started the practice of adoration in right earnest. Chanting the names of God he began to move about in the countryside. A longing for the direct perception of God was aroused in his mind; but his immora-

propensities had not yet wholly disappear- ed. Compelled by evil habit his mind once more felt enamoured of a young lady. Following her footsteps, Bilva- mangala halted at the door of her house. The owner of the house was surprised to see a Brahman waiting at the threshold with a dismal look on his countenance. Questioned by him Bilvamangala revealed his mind to him with a guileless heart and said, "I long to see the girl but once to my heart's content. Please send her to me here." The young lady was none other than the wife of the wealthy merchant with whom Bilvamangala was holding this conversation. The good merchant saw nothing inherently wrong in this request and was anxious to accommodate the Brahman as far as he could. He, therefore, entered the house to call his wife. Meantime Bilvamangala's mind turned into a turbulent ocean, in which thought-waves of various kinds were furiously raging.

Bilvamangala had already turned a devotee of God; how could there be any fall for him? His vision had been clouded by ignorance. The Lord, who is extremely fond of the poor and miserable, opened his eye of wisdom. Bilvamangala woke to the wretched condition of his mind; his heart was filled with remorse and he plucked two big thorns from an adjoining wood-apple tree with what intention nobody knew. Meantime, the wife of the wealthy merchant made her appearance there. Looking at her intently for some time, Bilvamangala mentally reproached his eyes and said, "O detestable eyes! but for you I would not have been reduced to this wretched condition." Mentally uttering these words Bilvamangala, in a fit of momentary weakness or whatever it may be, thought it best at that moment to punish his wayward eyes and instantly thrust the pair of thorns into them! Streams of blood began to flow from his eyes. Laughing and dancing, Bilvamangala rent the air with the chanting of the

Divine Names. The merchant and his wife were distressed at this sad turn, but they were quite helpless in the matter. Remnants of impurity lying hidden in the inmost recesses of Bilvamangala's heart got washed away, and he was extremely impatient now to meet the "Protector of the forlorn" as speedily as possible.

The terrible pangs of separation from his most beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa turned the blinded eyes of Bilvamangala into a perennial fount of tears. Having no feeling of hunger and thirst, he had lost all distinction of sleep and wakefulness as well. Rending the air with the shouts of 'Kṛṣṇa' Bilvamangala roamed from forest to forest and from village to village. That the "Friend of the poor", for whom he had deliberately put out his eyes, and the Beloved for whose sake he had spurned a life of luxury and ease should be so tardy to appear was too much for a lover who was pining to meet Him. How could Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is all love, remain nonchalant under such circumstances? Appearing in the guise of a small cowherd boy the Lord approached Bilvamangala, and spoke to him in accents the melody of which enchanted even the mind of sages. "O blind singer," He said, "you must be feeling awfully hungry. Here is a sweet dish and a glass of water. Please accept them." Enthralled by the very melody of His voice Bilvamangala's heart leapt with joy as he partook of that rare dish touched by His blessed hands. "Tell me, dear!" he enquired of the boy, "where do you live? What is your name, and what is your occupation?"

"My dwelling is near at hand," replied the boy. "I bear no particular name; but I respond to any name by which I may be called. My work is to tend the cows. Whosoever loves me, gets my love in return." Bilvamangala felt enraptured by the music of the child's voice, which surpassed even the

melody of the lute. The boy, while parting company with Bilvamangala, assured the latter that he would provide him with food every day. Bilvamangala gladly accepted this gratuitous offer and requested the boy to see him every day. The boy disappeared and took with him the heart of Bilvamangala too. True to his word, he visited Bilvamangala every day with a dish of dainty food.

Bilvamangala had not the least suspicion that the boy was none else than Śrī Kṛṣṇa, for whose sake he had accepted a mendicant's role, and put out his eyes with thorns. But the boy had cast such a spell on his mind that he could brook no talk other than that of the boy. He said to himself one day, "I came here leaving behind all objects of worldly attachment, but a new source of attachment awaited me. Freed from the allurements of woman I have fallen a prey to the charm of this boy." While this thought was agitating Bilvamangala's mind, the sportive boy quietly came near him and said in a maddening voice, "O venerable Sir, what are you thinking about? Have you a mind to visit Brindaban?" Bilvamangala's soul rejoiced at the very mention of Brindaban; but pointing out his helplessness due to lack of vision he said, "O friend, how can a blind man like me aspire to visit Brindaban?" "Take hold of this end of my stick," the boy replied, "I shall take you to Brindaban." A thrill of joy passed through Bilvamangala when he heard this. Holding the other end of the stick the Lord Himself acted as Bilvamangala's guide and led him to Brindaban. Praised be this tender-heartedness of the Lord! He personally guides the devotee, and shows him the path! Not long afterwards the boy said, "Here you are in Brindaban. I am off now." Bilvamangala caught hold of the boy by the arm. At the very touch of his person Bilvamangala felt as if a current of electricity had passed through his body; all the faculties of his senses were

## From Sinner to Saint



**“Even if the vilest sinner worships Me with exclusive devotion, he should be accounted a saint; for he has rightly resolved. ( He is positive in his belief that there is nothing like devoted worship of God. )”**

**( IX. 30. )**

illuminated by a flood of Sattvic light. Blessed with the divine vision he discovered that the boy was none other than his beloved Lord. A shiver ran through his body and tears of joy streamed forth from his eyes. He caught the arm of the blessed Lord all the tighter and said, "Lord! I have now recognized you. I have caught hold of you after a long time. You cannot elude me now." The Lord tried to disengage His arm from the blind man's grip; but Bilvamangala would not let Him go.

With a sudden jerk the Lord freed His arm from the grasp of Bilvamangala. How could poor, blind Bilvamangala withstand Him with the help of whose strength Mâyā kept the entire creation prostrate at her feet? But Bilvamangala had tied the Lord with a knot which even He could not easily undo. Baffled by the Lord, Bilvamangala said, "Are You really leaving me? But remember this:—

"Kṛṣṇa, it is no wonder that You are leaving me, freeing Your arm by force. But I shall acknowledge Your manliness only when You manage to slip out of my heart."\*

*Showing thus lack of discrimination in Him on the basis of moral and immoral conduct, the Lord now proceeds to reveal in the next two verses that He makes no distinction between high and low birth, and glorifying devotion in the form of self-surrender to God, commands Arjuna to take to the practice of adoration.*

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।

स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥ ३२ ॥

पार्थ O son of Prthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; स्त्रियः women; वैश्याः members of the trading and agriculturist classes; शूद्राः those belonging to the labouring and artisan classes; तथा as well as; पापयोनयः those of vile birth; ये अपि whoever; स्युः (they) may be; ते they; अपि too; माम् Me; व्यपाश्रित्य taking refuge in; पराम् गतिम् the supreme goal; हि verily; यान्ति reach.

\* हस्तमुक्षिप्य यातोऽसि बलात् कृष्ण किमद्वुतम् । हृदयावदि निर्यासि पौरुषं गणयामि ते ॥

† चिन्तामणिर्जयति सोमगिरिर्गुरुमे शिक्षागुरुश्च भगवान्छिपिच्छमौलिः ।

यत्पादकल्पतरुपङ्कजशेखरेषु लीलास्वयंवरसं लभते जयश्रीः ॥



Arjuna, women, Vaiśyas ( members of the trading and agriculturist classes ), Śūdras ( those belonging to the labouring and artisan classes ), as well as those of vile birth ( such as the pariah ), whoever they may be, taking refuge in Me they too attain the supreme goal. ( 32 )

People who are born as a result of past sins among low classes such as the pariah are referred to here as 'Pāpayonayaḥ' ( those of vile birth ). Besides these, members of such non-Āryan or Barbarian races such as the Huns, the Bhils, the Khasis, the Ionians and so on are also recognized by the Śāstras as falling under the category of 'Pāpayonayaḥ'. The word 'Pāpayonayaḥ' in this verse stands for all of them. Birth in a low caste or community constitutes no barrier to the practice of devotion to God. Unadulterated love is the only qualification required for this practice.\* Among these classes have appeared in ancient and modern times many great devotees who realized God by dint of their unsullied devotion. The names of Guha, who belonged to the class known as the Niṣādas, and others are the best known among them.

#### GUHA, THE CHIEF OF THE NIṢĀDAS

Guha, who belonged to the class known as the Niṣādas, ruled over Śṛṅgaverapura. He was a great devotee of God. While on His way to the forest Bhagavān Śrī Rāma, together with

Śrī Sitā and Lakṣmaṇa, accepted the hospitality of Guha. The Lord recognized him as a friend; it was therefore that he was embraced and clasped to the bosom by Bharata when the latter met him later. Goswami Tulasidas says in his *Rāmacharitamānasa* :—

"When he saw him ( Guha ) lying prostrate before him, Bharata took him up by the hand and clasped him to his bosom. He felt at that moment as if his own brother Lakṣmaṇa was there, and his heart overflowed with love."

The adjective 'Pāpayonayaḥ' in this verse cannot be taken to be a qualification of women, Vaiśyas and Śūdras. The Vaiśyas rank among the 'twice-born' classes. The Śāstras recognize their full right to study the Vedas and perform sacrifices and other Vedic rites. Therefore, falling as they do under the category of the twice-born classes, they could not have been referred to as of vile birth. Besides, while discussing the destiny of Jīvas varying according to the quality of their past Karma, the *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad* distinctly says :—

\* नास्ति तेषु जातिविद्यारूपकुलधनक्रियादिभेदः ।

( Nārada: *Aphorisms on Bhakti* 72 )

"Birth, scholarship, external appearance, pedigree, wealth and occupation etc. make no difference in devotees."

आनिन्द्योन्यधिक्रियते पारम्पर्यात् सामान्यवत् ।

( Śaṅḍilya: *Aphorisms on Bhakti* 78 )

"Tradition upholds the title of all men including those of vile birth to the practice of Devotion, even as to the practice of common virtues such as non-violence etc."

भक्त्याहमेकया ग्राह्यः श्रद्धयाऽऽत्मा प्रियः सताम् । भक्तिः पुनाति मन्त्रिणा श्वपाकानपि सम्भवात् ॥

( *Bhāgavata* XI. xiv. 21 )

"O Uddhava! I, the beloved 'self' of the holy ones, can be captivated only through devotion. Devotion to Me sanctifies even outcasts by birth."

"Among them, those who perform meritorious deeds in this world soon attain superior birth, *i.e.*, are born among the Brahmins, the Kṣatriyas or the Vaiśyas. Whereas those who perform evil deeds in this world attain vile birth, *i.e.*, are born as dogs, swine or outcasts."\* ( V. x. 7 )

This conclusively proves that the Vaiśyas cannot be counted among those of vile birth. As for women, those belonging to the Brahman, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya classes are recognized as entitled to perform sacrifices and other Vedic rituals along with their husbands. Hence they too do not come under the category of 'Pāpayonayah'. The greatest objection to this interpretation lies in the fact that it precludes the possibility of the pariah and others attaining the highest goal through devotion, which is admitted by all the Śāstras and which marks the crowning glory of devotion.† Therefore, instead of treating 'Pāpayonayah' as a qualification of women, Vaiśyas and Śūdras, it would be much more reasonable to interpret the word as referring to men lower in birth even than the Śūdras.

Women, Vaiśyas and Śūdras too have claimed a number of devotees. As

### YAJNAPATNĪS

A few Brahmins were engaged in performing a sacrifice at Brindaban. With the concurrence of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa His cowherd playmates approached the Brahmins and asked them for food. The sacrificing Brahmins drove them away with a rebuke. The boys thereupon approached the wives of the Brahmins. The very name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa drove them into raptures and they went to Śrī Kṛṣṇa carrying articles of food with them. One of the Brahmins prevented his wife from going and forcibly locked her up. Her love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa swelled to such an extent that meditating on the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as conceived by her through hearsay she cast off her physical encasement and joined the Lord before all the rest ( *Bhāgavata* X. 23 ).

### SAMĀDHI

Samādhi was the son of a wealthy merchant, Drumiṇa by name. Covetous of his wealth, his wife and children conspired against him and drove him out of home. Retiring to the forest he

\* त्व इह रमणीयचरणा अभ्याशो ह यत्ते रमणीया योनिमापधेरन् ब्राह्मणयोनि वा क्षत्रिययोनि वा वैश्ययोनि वाथ य इह कपूयचरणा अभ्याशो ह यत्ते कपूया योनिमापधेरन्क्षत्रियोनि वा सूकरयोनि वा चाण्डालयोनि वा ।

† किरातहूणान्ध्रपुलिन्दपुक्कसा आभीरकङ्का यवनाः खसादयः ।

येऽन्ये च पापा ऋषपाश्रयाश्रयाः शुद्धयन्ति तस्मै प्रभविष्णवे नमः ॥

( *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* II. iv. 18. )

"Obeisance to Bhagavān Viṣṇu, the Lord of the universe, taking shelter under whose devotees members of the low-born classes such as the Kirātas, the Huns, the Āndhras, the Pulindas, the Pukkasas, the Ābhiras, the Kankas, the Yavanas and the Khasis and even others who are steeped in sin become pure."

व्याधस्याचरणं ध्रुवस्य च वयो विद्या गजेन्द्रस्य का का जातिर्विदुरस्य यादवपतेरुग्रस्य किं पौरुषम् ।

कुब्जायाः कमनीयरूपमधिकं किं तत्सुदाक्षो धनं भक्त्या तुष्यति केवलं न च गुणैर्भक्तिप्रियो माधवः ॥

"What righteous conduct did the hunter possess? Was Dhruva advanced in age? What erudition did the lord of elephants possess? Did Vidura claim any high descent? What was the prowess exhibited by Ugrasena, the Yādava king? Did Kubjā ( the hump-backed maid-servant of Kamsa ) have an attractive appearance? What wealth did Sudāmā claim? The Lord is pleased only by devotion, and not by merits; for He is fond of devotion alone."

met there a certain king; called Suratha. He too had repaired to the forest, having suffered at the hands of his faithless ministers, generals and his own kith and kin. So both were sailing in the same boat. Ultimately they both sought refuge with the Divine Mother, who is all truth, all knowledge and all bliss, and shaking off all attachment to worldly enjoyments they betook themselves to the worship of the goddess. On their completing three years of worship the Goddess appeared before them and asked them to seek some boon from Her. The craving for worldly enjoyment still lurked in King Suratha's mind; he, therefore, asked for objects of enjoyment. The mind of Samādhi, however, was full of dispassion. He had realized the momentary and sorrowful nature of the world; therefore, he sought the knowledge of the divine truth. By grace of the Goddess his ignorance was dispelled, and he attained the true Knowledge of God. ( *Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa* 81-93; *Brahmaivaivarta-Purāṇa* 62-63. )

#### SANJAYA

Sañjaya was the son of a charioteer, Gāvalguṇa by name. He was exceptionally quiet and polite by nature, and possessed the knowledge of both the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of God. Nay, he was devoted to righteous conduct, fearless, truthful, self-controlled, pious and outspoken, was a great devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and possessed knowledge of the reality about Him. He had intimacy with Arjuna from their early boyhood, hence he had the freedom to enter the inner apartments of Arjuna whenever he liked. When he called on the Pāṇḍavas to negotiate on behalf of the Kauravas, Arjuna was resting in the gynaeceum. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Draupadī and Satyabhāmā ( Śrī Kṛṣṇa's favourite consort ) were also there. Returning to the Kaurava Court, Sañjaya gave a beautiful and lucid account of his meeting with them. ( *Mahā., Udyoga., LIX.* )

During the Mahābhārata war the sage Vedavyāsa gifted him with supersensuous vision, with the help of which he succeeded in reporting to King Dhṛtarāṣṭra all incidents connected with the war.

The reality about Śrī Kṛṣṇa was known only to a few exalted souls like Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa, Sañjaya, Vidura and Bhīṣma. Addressed by Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Sañjaya once said, "I do not follow the promptings of Avidyā ( Nescience ) under the spell of attachment to wife and children, nor do I practise any virtue without offering the same to God. I have come to know the reality about Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the object of universal prayer, only through purity of heart and the practice of Bhaktiyoga." Discussing the reality and prowess of the Lord, Sañjaya further said, "The Discus wielded by the noble-minded Śrī Kṛṣṇa is five cubits in diameter, but it can assume any dimension according to His will. That circular weapon, radiating a flood of light, has come into being in order to fathom the relative strength of all. It is fatal to the Kauravas but most friendly to the Pāṇḍavas. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who possesses inordinate strength, killed as a mere sport terrible demons like Narakāsura, and Śambarāsura, and proud tyrants like Kamsa and Śiśupāla. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is most handsome and supremely powerful, can subjugate the earth, heaven and the intermediate space by His mere thought .....If the entire universe ranges itself on one side and Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone on the other, He will be found to excel in substance. He can by His mere will reduce the world to ashes, but the whole world is incapable of harming Him in the least. Where there is truth, where there is virtue, where there is a sense of shame in sinning against God, and where there is straightforwardness, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is there; and where Śrī Kṛṣṇa is, victory is bound to follow.\* The supreme

\* यतः सत्यं यतो धर्मो यतो हीराजवं यतः । ततो भवति गोविन्दो यतः कृष्णस्ततो जयः ॥

( *Mahā., Udyoga., 68-9.* )

Person, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the soul of the entire creation, rules and guides the earth, heaven and the intermediate region as a mere sport; as if deluding all these people and using the Pāṇḍavas as His tools He seeks to extirpate your unrighteous and foolish sons. By His own power Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa constantly revolves the wheel of Time, the wheel of creation and the wheel of successive ages. I utter the bare truth when I say that Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself is the sole Lord of Time, Death and the entire universe, consisting of sentient and insentient creation. Just as the farmer gathers his corn when the crop is ready, so does Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the supreme Lord of Yoga, even though sustaining the universe, undertakes to destroy it too. He deludes all by His great delusive power; but those who take refuge in Him never get deluded.\*

Thereafter, Sañjaya gave out to King Dhṛtarāṣṭra the various names of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and their beautiful meanings. Sañjaya too tried his very best to prevent the Mahābhārata war, but in vain. When Dhṛtarāṣṭra proceeded to the forest, Sañjaya also accompanied his master.

×                      ×                      ×

By using the word 'Api' twice in this verse the Lord shows absolute lack

of discrimination in Him on the score of high and low birth. The intention of this statement of the Lord seems to be that it is altogether immaterial to Him whether His devotee is a woman, a Vaiśya or a Śūdra, i. e., of lower rank when compared to a Brahman or a Kṣatriya, or even a pariah, who is regarded as still lower. Whoever worships Him, taking refuge in Him, attains the supreme state.

Taking refuge in the Lord here means surrendering oneself to Him with absolute faith according to the spirit of verse 34 below. This consists in remaining ever contented under every circumstance, taking it to be a dispensation of God; constantly hearing, chanting and reflecting on the names, form, virtues and stories of the Lord, recognizing Him alone as the goal, supporter and lord; worshipping Him with faith and devotion, bowing to Him, carrying out His behests, and offering all actions to Him.

Attainment of the supreme Goal by such devotees means direct communion with God. The intention is to show that men and women of any caste whatsoever who surrender themselves to God in the manner stated above attain direct communion with Him.

किं पुनर्ब्राह्मणाः पुण्या भक्ता राजर्षयस्तथा ।

अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ॥ ३३ ॥

पुनः then; किम् how much more; पुण्याः holy; ब्राह्मणाः Brahmins; तथा and; भक्ताः devout; राजर्षयः royal sages; असुखम् joyless (and); अनित्यम् transient; इमम् this; लोकम् human life; प्राप्य having obtained; माम् Me; भजस्व (constantly) worship.

How much more, then, holy Brahmins and royal sages devoted to Me! Therefore, having obtained this joyless and transient human life, constantly worship Me. (33)

\* ये तमेव प्रपद्यन्ते न ते मुह्यन्ति मानवाः ।

( Mahā., Udyoga., 68-69 )

By using the words 'Kim' and 'Punah', the Lord intends to convey that when even the vilest sinner (IX. 30) and members of the low-born classes such as the pariah (IX. 32) succeed in attaining the supreme state through the practice of adoration, there should be no wonder that devotees who rank high both in lineage and moral character and conduct, viz., pious Brahmans and royal sages, should do so by taking refuge in Him.

The word 'Punyāḥ' stands for those who are pious by nature and virtuous in conduct. This adjective is intended to qualify the Brahmans alone; for the word 'Rājarṣayah' applies only to those members of the royal class who are spotless in character and noble in conduct like the Ṛṣis (sages). Hence the use of the qualification 'Punyāḥ' would be redundant in their case.

The word 'Bhaktāḥ', however, should be connected with Brahmans and royal sages both; for it is Bhakti which has been spoken of here as responsible for attaining the supreme goal.

Countless devotees have appeared among the Brahmans and the royal sages. It is just to give a faint indication of their greatness that a reference is made below to Mahārṣi Sūtikṣṇa and the royal sage Ambarīṣa.

#### SUTIKṢṆA

Mahārṣi Sūtikṣṇa used to reside in the Daṇḍaka forest. He was a disciple of the great Agastya. An ascetic of no mean order possessing a remarkable spiritual glory, he was a great devotee as well. He had to his credit the deliverance of a Vaiśya, named Duṣṇanya, who had turned into a devil due to his sins. (*Skanda., Brahma., 22*). Sūtikṣṇa was exclusively devoted to Bhagavān Śrī Rāma. When he heard that accompanied by Śrī Sītā, who was no other than the Divine Mother, Śrī Rāma was coming to the Daṇḍaka forest, his joy knew no bounds. Indulging

in pious dreams of various kinds he went forward to meet the Lord. In the ecstasy of love he lost all consciousness of his external surroundings. He forgot his own identity as well as his destination, and did not know in which direction he was proceeding and whether there was any track before him or not. Now he would turn round and then advance in the same direction again; and now he would begin to dance singing praises of the Lord! Hiding Himself behind a tree the Lord of Raghus looked on the ecstatic mood of His devotee. Observing the intensity of the sage's love the Lord, who dispels the fear of transmigration, revealed Himself in Sūtikṣṇa's heart. Obtaining a vision of the Lord within his own heart, Sūtikṣṇa now sat motionless in the middle of the track. A thrill of joy ran through his whole body. The Lord of Raghus then approached him; Śrī Rāma was extremely delighted to see him in that rapturous mood.

The Lord of Raghus tried in many ways to awaken the sage from his trance; but the latter, who was enjoying the bliss of absorption in the Lord, would not wake up. When, however, the Lord withdrew His divine form from the sage's heart, he felt uneasy and got up. But as soon as he opened his eyes, he saw before him the trio of Śrī Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa and Śrī Rāma, the abode of bliss, who is easily distinguishable by His swarthy and beauteous form. The reward of his austerities stood revealed before him. His life became supremely blessed! (Śrī Rāmacharitamānasa, Āraṇyakaṇḍa).

#### AMBARĪṢA

Rājarṣi Ambarīṣa was the illustrious son of King Nābhāga, a grandson of Vaivasvata Manu (the progenitor of the present race of living beings). He was an emperor who ruled over the entire terrestrial region. But knowing as he did that all earthly glory is as unreal as the world seen in a dream, he had dedicated his whole life to God. His mind, together

with all his senses, remained ever engaged in the service of God.

On one occasion the king with his queen took the vow of observing a fast on every Ekādaśī (eleventh lunar day of the dark and bright fortnights) for a whole year with a view to propitiating the Lord. On the day following the last Ekādaśī of the year worship was offered to the Lord with due ceremony. When the king was about to break his fast, the sage Durvāsā called on him with a batch of his pupils. Receiving the sage with all honour the king invited him to dinner. The sage accepted the royal invitation, and went to the bank of the Jamuna to perform his daily routine of midday worship. The twelfth lunar day was to expire only about half an hour later. A fast observed on an Ekādaśī day gets nullified if it is not broken in course of the twelfth. And it would be inhospitable on his part if he broke his fast before feeding an honoured guest like Durvāsā. The king, therefore, sought the advice of learned Brahmins in this dilemma and with their concurrence formally broke his fast by sipping a little water out of that in which the feet of the Lord's image had been washed, and awaited the return of the sage to entertain him. After finishing his daily routine when sage Durvāsā returned to the king's palace, and came to know by supernatural power acquired through religious austerities that the king had broken his fast during his absence, he lost his temper, and with an angry look spoke as follows to the pious king, who stood before him with joined palms as a culprit: "Look at the impertinent and sacrilegious behaviour of this vile king, who is intoxicated with the pride of wealth! He is no longer a devotee of Viṣṇu. He has begun to look upon himself as the Deity. Having invited me as a guest he has broken his fast before feeding me. Let him taste the fruit of this impertinence!" With these words the irascible sage plucked a lock of matted hair from his head and threw

it on the ground with great violence, when immediately, like a deadly fire, a terrible demoness of the class known as 'Kṛtyā' manifested herself, and rushed at the king, sword in hand, shaking the earth by her heavy treads. Ambariṣa, however, who had unwavering faith in God, stood undaunted where he was, without receding a step. He who sees God everywhere can have no cause for fear; why should he be afraid of anyone?

The demoness had hardly reached Ambariṣa when the Lord's discus known as Sudarśana instantaneously reduced her to ashes, even as a terrible forest fire burns down a hissing serpent. The discus now pursued the sage in order to wreak vengeance on him. Unnerved by this unforeseen turn of events the sage ran for life; but the discus still doggedly pursued him. Durvāsā wandered in all directions and traversed all the fourteen regions of the universe, but he found shelter nowhere. No one afforded him or even promised him help. As a last resort he went to Vaikuṇṭha (the eternal abode of Bhagavān Viṣṇu), and falling at the feet of the Deity he cried out in distress, "Lord! Ignorant of Your glory I have insulted Your devotee. Kindly exonerate me from this fault. By merely chanting Your name even the denizens of hell are rid of the tortures. Therefore, pray forgive this fault of mine."

The Lord replied as follows:—

"O Brahman! I am completely under the domination of My devotee; I am not free. The devotee is extremely dear to Me and rules over My heart. I hold My own Self, and even My own Consort, Goddess Lakṣmī, as of no account when compared to the virtuous soul who is extremely devoted to Me, and who looks upon Me as his supreme goal. How can I forsake the devotee who having renounced his wife, progeny, home, family, wealth, life, and the entire prospects of this world and the next for My sake solely depends on Me? Just as a devoted

and faithful wife wins over her virtuous lord by dint of her unadulterated love, even so the devotee who has his mind fixed on Me and looks upon all with the same eye wins Me over by his unalloyed devotion. To say nothing of perishable worlds like heaven 'etc., he would not accept even the four types of final beatitude (viz., residence in the abode of God, close proximity to the Deity, acquiring a form similar to the form of the Deity and fusion with the Deity) to which he gets entitled by virtue of his devotion. He regards everything as valueless when compared to Divine Love."

Finally the Lord said, "O Brahman, if you seek deliverance from this calamity, you should approach the blessed King Ambariṣa himself, and crave his pardon. Then alone you will attain peace and happiness." Thus commanded by the Lord, Durvāsā turned back towards the terrestrial region.

The great devotee Ambariṣa, on this side, was passing through a peculiar state of mind. Ever since the Discus started in pursuit of Durvāsā, the royal sage had been pining out of sympathy for the latter. The Brahman had gone away without taking food, and the thought that it was due to him that the Brahman had to run so hard for fear of death pricked his conscience all the time. Under such circumstances, the king felt he had no right to take food himself. Reflecting thus Ambariṣa gave up food from that very moment and lived on water alone. Durvāsā returned after a full year, but Ambariṣa budged not an inch from his vow.

Durvāsā clutched the feet of the royal sage as soon as he returned to his palace. Ambariṣa felt much abashed at this and humbly prayed to Sudarśana (the discus of Lord Viṣṇu) in the following words: "If I do not entertain in my heart the least amount of hatred for the sage, and

if God, who is the Self of all living beings, is pleased with me, let yourself be appeased and deliver the sage from this calamity." This prayer appeased Sudarśana. Durvāsā, who was tormented with fear, was himself again and marks of joy and gratitude were clearly visible on his face. (*Śrīmad Bhāgavata* IX. 4-5)

x x x

Birth as a human being is exceptionally rare. It is obtained as a result of great merit, and through special grace of God. It is vouchsafed only for God-Realization. The life of that being alone is fruitful, who having obtained the human body strives for God-Realization. On the other hand, he who seeks gratification of self through this remains deprived of the true blessings of human birth. For human life is wholly joyless; there is not the least trace of happiness anywhere in it. Contact with sense-enjoyments, which is regarded by man as a form of delight, is really painful inasmuch as it throws him, again and again, into the whirlpool of births and deaths. Therefore, instead of regarding human life as delightful, man should realize as speedily as possible the object for attaining which this human existence has been vouchsafed to him. For frail as this human body is, no one knows which moment it may cease to function. Hence one should wake up to the gravity of the situation. Neither should a man fall into the snare of enjoyments taking human existence to be a source of delight, nor should he put off the practice of adoration, considering the human body as eternal. If this life gets frittered away due to his own negligence, nothing but fruitless repentance will be left open to him. The Śruti says:—

●

"If God is realized in this very life, well and good. If, however, He is not realized in the course of this life, one will be a great loser."\* (*Kena Up.* II. 5.)

Therefore, the Lord says that having

\* इह चेदवेदीक्ष्य सत्यमस्ति न चेदिहावेदीन्महती विनष्टिः ।

obtained the human body one should constantly and exclusively devote oneself to the practice of adoration and should not forget Him even for a moment.

The word 'Mām' in this verse stands for the qualified aspect of God, and adoration consists in devoting oneself to God in the way indicated in the follow-

ing verse, viz., dedicating one's mind, intellect, senses and body etc. to God and God alone. Speedy attainment of God is possible through the practice of Bhajana alone, and in God-Realization alone lies the fulfilment of the object of human existence. It is therefore that the Lord exhorts Arjuna in this verse to practise Bhajana or adoration of God.

*Revealing the glory of Bhajana in the foregoing verses, Arjuna was eventually exhorted to practise the same. The Lord, therefore, now delineates the process of Bhajana, or self-surrender to God, and concludes the Chapter.*

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥ ३४ ॥

मन्मनाः भव fix your mind on Me; मद्भक्तः be devoted to Me; मद्याजी (भव) worship Me; माम् नमस्कुरु (and) make obeisance to Me; एवम् thus; आत्मानम् your self; युक्त्वा linking (with Me); मत्परायणः solely depending on Me; माम् to Me; एव alone; एष्यसि you shall come.

Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me and make obeisance to Me; thus linking your self with Me and entirely depending on Me, you shall come to Me. (34)

Knowing God as almighty and omniscient, the supreme Ruler of all the worlds, beyond all as well as all-formed, absolute as well as relative, formless as well as with form, the ocean of beauty, sweetness and power and the very embodiment of supreme Love, when the practicant gets truly acquainted with the virtues, glory, truth and secret of God, and comes to the definite conclusion that God alone is the supreme object of his love, nothing in this world retains the least charm for him. In that state he entertains no attraction even for the rarest enjoyment of this world. When the practicant reaches this stage, his mind naturally recoils from all objects of this world and the next, and he devotes himself with exclusive love and supreme reverence to constant remembrance of God and God alone. Such loving remembrance of God becomes the very prop

of his life, and he cannot afford to forget Him even for a moment. The devotee who has attained this state is referred to here as 'Manmanāh' (he whose mind is absorbed in God).

A devotee of God is he who resigns Himself to the will of God, taking Him to be the supreme goal, the sole supporter and lord, nay, the supreme refuge and the best friend and protector; who is ever contented with every dispensation of God; who carries out His commands; who keeps his mind, intellect and senses absorbed in hearing, chanting and remembering His names, virtues, glory and stories etc., and does everything for the sake of His pleasure.

Visiting temples and offering proper worship to the sacred images of God; installing an image of one's beloved Deity in one's own home, if convenient,



and offering worship to the same with due ceremony, faith and love; installing a mental image of the Deity in the cavity of one's own heart or in the open space just in front of the practisant, and offering mental worship to the same; showing due reverence to His commandments, to the scenes of His sacred sports, and to His portraits etc.; keeping oneself engaged in activities connected with His service and worshipping Him through disinterested performance of sacrifices; looking upon one's parents and other elders and Brahmans in particular, and all living beings in general, as so many manifestations of God, or knowing God to be present in all as the inner witness, and offering them due worship and honour, and sincerely trying to gratify and render good offices to them with mind, body and material resources: all these acts are included in what is known as the worship of God.

The word 'Mām' in this verse refers to that integral Divinity who is the creator, destroyer and controller of the whole universe, all-sustaining, all-powerful, all-pervading, all-knowing, the universal friend and well-wisher, the abode of all virtues, the supreme and best Person; who is both absolute and qualified as well as with form and without form; who sustains all as Viṣṇu, creates all as Brahmā, and destroys all as Rudra; who appears in our midst from age to age in various divine forms such as the Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion, Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and so on, and enacts wonderful sports in this world; and who manifests Himself in various forms as desired by His

devotees, and takes them under His protection. And paying due homage in a devout and reverent spirit with one's mind, speech and body to God with or without form, to an image or portrait of the Deity, to His blessed feet or marks thereof, to the scriptures expounding the truth, secret, love, glory and enchanting sports of the Lord, to saints and holy men who are the living images of God, nay, to all living beings of the universe, taking them as so many manifestations of God or considering God to be present in them as the inner witness—all this is included in offering obeisance to God.

The word 'Ātmānam' (self) in this verse stands for the body, including the mind, intellect and senses. And applying them all to God in the way indicated above is what is meant by linking the self with Him.

Complete dependence on God consists in thus offering everything to Him in the manner suggested above, and looking upon Him as the supreme object worth attaining, supreme goal, supreme refuge and one's all-in-all.

The word 'Eva' has been used for the sake of emphasis. The Lord thereby seeks to emphasize the fact that by striving on the lines suggested above Arjuna would undoubtedly attain Him. And obtaining a direct vision of God during one's very life-time, knowing Him in reality and entering His very being, or ascending to His divine abode, living in close proximity with Him, or obtaining a form similar to the Divine Form: all these are included in God-Realization.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे

श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे राजविद्याराजगुह्ययोगो

नाम नवमेऽध्यायः ॥ ९ ॥

*Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the Dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the ninth Chapter entitled "The Yoga of the Sovereign Science and the Sovereign Secret."*

## Chapter X

The chapter mainly deals with the special manifestations of God; hence it has been given the title of Vibhūtiyoga, or the Yoga of Divine manifestations.

In the opening verse of this chapter the Lord undertakes to confide once more the supreme gospel and invites Arjuna to hear the same. In the second and third He describes His own glory under the name of 'Yoga', and indicates the fruit of its knowledge. Briefly enumerating His special manifestations in verses 4 to 6, He gives out the fruit of knowing them as well as His Yoga in the seventh. Detailing in the eighth and ninth the mode of worship practised by His wise devotees possessing exclusive love for Him, He describes the fruit of such worship in the tenth and eleventh. Thereafter, extolling the Lord in verses 12 to 15 Arjuna requests Him in verses 16 to 18 to describe in detail His special manifestations and power of Yoga once more. Pointing out the range of His divine manifestations as infinite and undertaking to name only the chief among them in the nineteenth, the Lord recounts them in verses 20 to 39. Reiterating the fact that the range of His divine manifestations is infinite, the Lord winds up this topic in the fortieth. And the chapter is concluded with a description of His divine glory under the name of 'Yoga' in the forty-first and forty-second verses.

*The exposition of Jñāna and Vijñāna ( the Knowledge of Nirguṇa and Saguṇa Brahma ) contained in Chapters VII to IX having become too abstruse, the Lord introduces this chapter in order to expound the truth clearly once more in a different way. In the very opening verse of this chapter the Lord undertakes to discuss the same subject.*

श्रीभगवानुवाच

भूय एव महाबाहो शृणु मे परमं वचः ।

यत्तेऽहं प्रीयमाणाय वक्ष्यामि हितकाम्यया ॥ १ ॥

महाबाहो O mighty-armed ( Arjuna ) ; भूयः एव once again ; मे My ; परमम् supreme ; वचः word ; शृणु hear ; यत् which ; अहम् I ; प्रीयमाणाय ते to you who are ( so ) loving ; हितकाम्यया out of solicitude for ( your ) welfare ; वक्ष्यामि shall speak.

Śrī Bhagavān Said: Arjuna, hear once again My supreme word, which I shall speak to you, who are so loving, out of solicitude for your welfare. ( 1 )

The use of the words 'Bhūyah' and 'Eva' ( once again ) in the beginning of the verse is intended to make it clear that the subject discussed in chapters VII to IX is being taken up once more, though in a different way.

The supreme word ( *Paramam Vachah* ) is that which unravels the mystery of the most secret virtues, glory and truth of the Supreme Person, God, and is conducive to His Realization. The words 'Paramam Vachah' in this verse, therefore, refer to the Lord's teaching in the present chapter, which is intended to unfold the secret of His virtues, glory and truth. By exhorting Arjuna to hear it once again, the Lord seeks to convey that the truth relating to Bhakti or devotion to Him is exceptionally difficult to understand; hence he should hear it

with great attention, reverence and love, considering it most essential to hear it again and again.

By using the adjective 'Priyamāṇāya' for Arjuna, the Lord says in effect, "Arjuna, the love you bear in your heart for Me is exceedingly great, and you listen to My words with utmost reverence and love, relishing them as nectar. It is therefore that without the least hesitation, and even unasked by you, I am repeatedly unravelling to you the mystery of My most secret virtues, glory and truth. All this is due to your love." And the use of the word 'Hitakāmyayā' indicates that Arjuna's love and devotion had filled the Lord's heart with solicitude for the latter's welfare. Therefore, whatever the Lord proposed to tell him was naturally an expression of His solicitude for his welfare.

*Taking up the subject proposed to be discussed in this chapter, the Lord first gives in the following five verses a short description of His Yogic power and divine glory.*

न मे विदुः सुरगणाः प्रभवं न महर्षयः ।

अहमादिर्हि देवानां महर्षीणां च सर्वशः ॥ २ ॥

मे My: प्रभवस् birth ( appearance in human or other garb out of mere sport ); न neither: सुरगणाः gods; विदुः know; न nor; महर्षयः great sages; हि because: अहम् I; सर्वशः in all respects; देवानाम् of gods; च and; महर्षीणाम् of the great seers ( as well ); आदिः ( am ) the prime cause.

Neither gods nor the great sages know the secret of My birth ( i. e., My appearance in human or other garb out of mere sport ); for I am the prime cause in all respects of gods as well as of the great seers. ( 2 )

God manifests Himself by His own incomparable Yogic power in the forms of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra for the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe respectively. He appears in our midst from time to time in different divine forms such as Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Divine Fish and the Divine Tortoise etc. for the destruction of the wicked and protection of His devotees, for establish-

ing righteousness on a firm footing and for redeeming the creatures of the world by enacting wonderful sports of various kinds. Nay, He assumes various forms as desired by His devotees in order to bless them with His sight and further manifests Himself in the form of the Universe for releasing an infinite stream of multifarious sports. The word 'Prabhavam' refers to all these manifestations

of God. On what particular occasions, in what particular forms, for what particular reasons and in what particular manner does God manifest Himself are divine secrets the reality of which is not known even to the gods and sages, who possess knowledge of preternatural things, much less to ordinary men of the world. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

The word 'Suragaṇāḥ' stands for the various classes or types of gods recognized by the Śāstras, such as the eleven Rudras, the eight Vasus, the

twelve Ādityas, Prajāpati, the forty-nine Maruts, the twin Aświnikumāras, Indra and so on. And the word 'Maharṣayah' should be taken to refer to the seven great sages, whose account is given in the commentary on verse 6 of this chapter.

By the latter half of this verse the Lord seeks to convey that the gods and all sages from whom this world has evolved have originated from Him; He is both their material and instrumental cause; and whatever learning, wisdom, energy, lustre and power are possessed by them are all derived from Him.

यो मामजमनादिं च वेत्ति लोकमहेश्वरम् ।

असम्मूढः स मर्त्येषु सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥ ३ ॥

यः who; माम् Me; अजम् unborn; अनादिम् without beginning; च and; लोकमहेश्वरम् supreme Lord of the universe; वेत्ति knows (in reality); मर्त्येषु among men; असम्मूढः undeluded; सः he; सर्वपापैः of all sins; प्रमुच्यते is purged.

He who knows Me in reality as birthless and without beginning, and as the supreme Lord of the Universe, he, undeluded among men, is purged of all sins. (3)

Though manifesting Himself in various forms through His own Yogamāyā (divine potency), God is really birthless (IV. 6), and is not born like other earthly beings. He simply plays the role of being born in order to gratify His devotees and establish righteousness on earth. To grasp this truth correctly with unquestioning faith and reverence is to know God as birthless. Even so God is the beginning or ultimate cause of all, but has no beginning Himself; He is eternal and dateless, and like other things he cannot be said to have started His career from a particular point of time. And to apprehend this truth properly with full faith and reverence is to know God as without beginning. Again, whatever regional gods there are, such as Indra, Varuṇa, Yama, Prajāpati and others, who are held to be divine in rank, God is the supreme Lord of them all; He is the

supreme Almighty, the controller, guide, creator, destroyer, supporter, nourisher and protector of all. And to grasp this truth properly with unquestioning faith is to know God as the supreme Lord of the universe.

The latter half of this verse seeks to bring out the fruit of knowing God as unborn, without beginning and the supreme Lord of the Universe as explained above. The intention is to show that of all men in this world, he alone who possesses a correct knowledge of God's glory as indicated above knows God in reality.

Again, he alone who knows God in reality is 'undeluded among men'; the rest are all deluded. And he who has thoroughly grasped the reality of God naturally devotes the precious moments of his life to the constant practice of adoration in every way (XV. 19); like

sensually-minded people he does not Hence being thoroughly purged of all remain engrossed in worldly enjoyments, sins of his present birth and past lives, taking them to be a source of delight. he easily succeeds in realizing God.

बुद्धिर्ज्ञानमसम्मोहः क्षमा सत्यं दमः शमः ।

सुखं दुःखं भवोऽभावो भयं चाभयमेव च ॥ ४ ॥

अहिंसा समता तुष्टिस्तपो दानं यशोऽयशः ।

भवन्ति भावा भूतानां मत्त एव पृथग्विधाः ॥ ५ ॥

बुद्धिः reason; ज्ञानम् right knowledge; असम्मोहः unclouded understanding; क्षमा forbearance; सत्यम् truthfulness; दमः control of the senses; शमः control of the mind; सुखम् joy; दुःखम् sorrow; भवः evolution; अभावः dissolution; भयम् fear; च and; अभयम् fearlessness; एव as well; च and; अहिंसा non-violence; समता equanimity; तुष्टिः contentment; तपः austerity; दानम् charity; यशः fame; अयशः obloquy; भूतानाम् in creatures; पृथग्विधाः diverse; भावाः traits; मत्तः from Me; एव alone; भवन्ति emanate.

Reason, right knowledge, unclouded understanding, forbearance, veracity, control over the senses and mind, joy and sorrow, evolution and dissolution, fear and fearlessness, non-violence, equanimity, contentment, austerity, charity, fame and obloquy,—these diverse traits of creatures emanate from Me alone.

( 4, 5 )

The function of the mind which determines what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, what is worthy of acceptance and what is worth rejecting, what is good and what is evil, is called 'Buddhi' or reason.

The term 'Jñāna' covers every form of knowledge, from ordinary worldly knowledge to the knowledge of the reality of God.

Regarding worldly enjoyments, which appear everlasting and delightful to all sensually-minded men, as transient, momentary and sorrowful, and refusing to be infatuated by them is called 'Asammoha' or unclouded understanding.

Harbouring evil intentions, doing an ill turn, usurping one's possessions, offering insult, causing hurt, using harsh or abusive

language, indulging in calumny or malicious gossip, practising incendiarism, administering poison, committing murder and causing direct or indirect harm,—all these are offences which easily provoke anger and retaliation. Total absence of the spirit of retaliation even under such provocation and notwithstanding the power to retaliate, and seeking exemption for the offender from all punishment in this as well as in the next world is what is known as forbearance.

'Veracity' means representing in sweet and loving words what has been actually seen with the eyes, heard through the ears, or apprehended through the mind exactly as it has been seen, heard or apprehended.

'Dama' consists in exercising restraint over the senses running after sense-objects, subjugating them and checking their

waywardness; whereas 'Śama' means subduing the mind by exercising full control over the same.

'Sukha' denotes joys of all kinds derived from contact with agreeable objects and the withdrawal of disagreeable ones. Even so 'sorrow' covers all forms of suffering\* caused by separation from agreeable objects and contact with disagreeable ones.

'Bhava' means coming into existence of the entire universe consisting of animate and inanimate beings at the time of creation; and its disappearance at the time of universal destruction is indicated by the word 'Abhāva'.

Agitation or perturbation of the mind caused by impending harm or cause of death is called 'Bhaya' (fear); and total absence of fear resulting from a sense of the omnipresence of God, or from any other cause, is known as 'Abhaya' (fearlessness).

'Ahimsā' or non-violence means non-infliction of suffering in any form and at any time even in a small degree on any being whatsoever in thought, word and deed.

'Samatā' or equanimity denotes constant equipoise of mind, free from partiality and prejudice, in the midst of objects, actions and incidents etc. which are likely to throw one off one's balance, such as joy and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat, praise and blame, honour and ignominy, friend and foe, etc.

'Tuṣṭi' or contentment is that uncomplaining attitude of mind which reconciles itself to every lot, taking it as the outcome of one's own good or evil destiny

or as a decree of Providence.

'Tapas' or austerity consists in enduring hardships for the sake of one's Dharma or duty, and 'Dāna' or charity consists in surrendering one's own proprietary rights for the benefit of others. Even so good and bad reputation are known as 'Yaśas' and 'Ayaśas' respectively.

All these characteristics and feelings existing in diverse creatures and varying according to the temperament of each owe their very existence to His backing, power and presence. This is what is meant by the second half of verse 5.

It may be observed here that while in the above two verses the antitheses of 'Sukha', 'Bhāva', 'Abhaya' and 'Yaśas', viz., 'Duḥkha', 'Abhāva', 'Bhaya' and 'Ayaśas' have been spoken of as proceeding from God, those of 'Kṣamā', 'Satya', 'Dama' and 'Ahimsā' etc. have not been so mentioned. How is that to be accounted for? The reason is not far to seek. It will be seen that entities like sorrow, dissolution, fear and obloquy etc. appear in this world just in order to enable beings to work out their evil destiny. Their emanation from God, who dispenses the fruit of our actions and controls the universe, is therefore quite in order. Vices and evil propensities like anger, mendacity, self-indulgence and violence etc., which are the antitheses of forbearance, veracity, sense-control and non-violence etc., on the other hand, do not proceed from God. The Gītā attributes these, elsewhere, to 'desire', born of ignorance (*vide* III. 37), and exhorts us to renounce them along with their root cause. That is why the antitheses of virtues and noble propensities like veracity etc. have not been mentioned in the present verse.

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\* Suffering has been classified in Hindu Śāstras under three heads: viz., (i) Adhibhautic or that caused through the agency of men, beasts, birds, insects, moths and other creatures; (ii) Adhidaivic or that resulting from natural calamities such as drought, excessive rainfall, earthquake, stroke of lightning and famine etc.; and (iii) Adhyatmic or that caused by distemper of the body, senses or mind.

महर्षयः सप्त पूर्वे चत्वारो मनवस्तथा ।

मद्भावा मानसा जाता येषां लोक इमाः प्रजाः ॥ ६ ॥

सप्त महर्षयः the seven great seers; चत्वारः पूर्वे their four elders ( Sanaka and others ); तथा and; मनवः the fourteen Manus or progenitors of mankind ( such as Swāyambhuva and his successors ); मद्भावाः ( who are all ) devoted to Me; मानसा जाताः were born of My will; येषाम् from whom; लोके in the world; इमाः प्रजाः all these creatures ( have descended ).

The seven great seers, their four elders ( Sanaka and others ), and the fourteen Manus or progenitors of mankind ( such as Swāyambhuva and his successors ), who are all devoted to Me, were born of My will; from them all these creatures in the world have descended. ( 6 )

While describing the marks of the seven great seers, the scripture says:—

एतान् भावानधीयाना ये चैत ऋषयो मताः ।  
सतैते सप्तभिश्चैव गुणैः सप्तर्षयः स्मृताः ॥  
दीर्घायुषो मन्त्रकृत ईश्वरा दिव्यचक्षुषः ।  
वृद्धाः प्रत्यक्षधर्माणो गोत्रप्रवर्तकाश्च ये ॥

( Vāyu-Purāṇa LXI. 93-94 )

"And those who dwell on the above sentiments of celestial seers\*, are recognized as Ṛṣis or seers. They are seven in number and are possessed of the following seven virtues; hence they are called Saptarṣis. They are all long-lived and composers of Vedic Mantras or hymns, possessed of divine powers and transcendent vision and senior in merits, learning and age. They are credited with an

intuitive or direct perception of Dharma or the divine law and are the founders of particular lines or stocks of families." It is these who propagate creation and regulate Dharma.†

These seven seers, or Saptarṣis as they are called, change in every Manvantara or tenure of office of a Manu. The Saptarṣis mentioned in this verse have been spoken of by the Lord as Maharṣis, or great seers, and as born of His will. Therefore, they are of a higher order than Ṛṣis or ordinary seers. Saptarṣis of this class find mention in the Śānti-Parva of the Mahābhārata. With reference to these God Himself, the Supreme Puruṣa, speaks as follows to Brahmā and the other celestials:—

\* For the marks of celestial seers *vide* commentary on verses 12 and 13 of this chapter.

† These seven seers are advocates of the worldly ways of life. Their views and mode of life are described as below:—

षट्कर्माभिरता नित्यं शालिनो गृहमेधिनः । तुल्यैर्व्यवहरन्ति स अदृष्टैः कर्महेतुभिः ॥  
अग्राम्यैर्वर्तयन्ति स रसैश्चैव स्वयंकृतैः । कुटुम्बिन ऋद्धिमन्तो बाह्यान्तरनिवासिनः ॥  
कृतादिषु युगाख्येषु सर्वेष्वेव पुनः पुनः । वर्णाश्रमव्यवस्थान् क्रियते प्रथमं तु वै ॥

( Vāyu-Purāṇa 61. 95-97 )

"These great seers are constantly engaged in the six pursuits enjoined upon a Brahman, viz., the study and teaching of the Vedas, performing sacrifices and officiating as priests in sacrifices performed by others and bestowing and accepting gifts. They maintain Gurukulas or seminaries in their hermitages for imparting instruction to Brahmachāris and marry and preserve the sacred fire only for the continuity of the race. They have matrimonial and other relations only with those who belong to the same Varṇa or caste, and enjoy irreproachable objects of their own creation. They maintain wife and children, own cattle and other possessions, and live both within and without the world of matter. At the beginning of every Yuga it is these seers who establish, for the first time, the institution of Varṇas and Āśramas\* ( the division of society into various grades and stages of life ) again and again.

मरीचिरङ्गिराश्चात्रिः पुलस्त्यः पुलहः ऋतुः ।  
 वसिष्ठ इति सप्तैते मानसा निर्मिता हि ते ॥  
 एते वेदविदो मुख्या वेदाचार्याश्च कल्पिताः ।  
 प्रवृत्तिधर्मिणश्चैव प्राजापत्ये च कल्पिताः ॥

( *Mahā., Śānti.*, 340. 69-70 )

principal teachers of the Vedas. They direct the worldly way of life, and have been appointed by Me to carry on the duty of Prajāpati, the deity presiding over creation."

"Marīchi, Angirā, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasistha—these seven great seers have been begotten by you out of your mind. They are all proficient in the Vedas, and I have made them the

They are the Saptarṣis of the very first Manvantara, viz., the Swāyambhuva Manvantara, of the present Kalpa ( *vide Harivamśa*, VII. 8-9 ). Therefore, it is these seven seers who are referred to in the present verse as 'Sapta Maharṣayah'.\*

\* All these seven seers are Prajāpatis of great religious austerity, possessing uncommon spiritual glow and wisdom. Being creators of beings, they are known as the 'Seven Brahmas' ( *Mahā., Śānti.*, 208. 3, 4, 6 ). Their brief sketches are given below:—

#### ( 1 ) MARĪCHI

This seer is held to be a part manifestation of a fraction of God. He has many wives, the chief of them being Sambhūti, a daughter of Prajāpati Dakṣa, and Dharmavratā, the daughter of a Brahman named Dharma. He has a large stock of descendants. Maharṣi Kaśyapa is one of his own sons. A portion of the *Padma-Purāṇa* was recited to him by Brahmā. Almost all the Purāṇas, the *Mahābhārata* and the Vedas too contain copious references to him. Brahmā delivered the *Brahma-Purāṇa* first of all to this sage. He is constantly engaged in the work of creation and maintenance of the world. Detailed accounts of this sage are to be found in the Vāyu, Skanda, Agni, Padma, Mārkaṇḍeya and Viṣṇu-Purāṇas and the *Mahābhārata* etc.

#### ( 2 ) ANGIRĀ

He is a seer possessed of uncommon spiritual glow. He has many wives, three of whom are more prominent. Of these Surūpā, daughter of Marīchi, bore Bṛhaspati; Swarāt, daughter of sage Kardama, gave birth to five sons, viz., Gautama, Vāmadeva and others; and Pathyā, daughter of Swāyambhuva Manu, brought forth three sons, Viṣṇu and others. ( *Vāyu-Purāṇa*, LXV. ); whereas Ātreya, daughter of Agni, gave birth to many sons collectively known as the Āngirāsas ( *Brahma-Purāṇa* ). According to some scriptures Bṛhaspati was born of his wife Śubhā ( *Mahābhārata* ).

#### ( 3 ) ATRI

This seer has his abode in the south. Anasūyā, who is famous for her feminine chastity, is his consort. Anasūyā is a co-uterine sister of Bhagavān Kapila, being born of Kardama and Devahūti. Bhagavān Śrī Rāma accepted the hospitality of this great lady during His sojourn in the forest. Adorning the divine Mother, Śrī Sitā, with ornaments and clothes of various kinds, Anasūyā also delivered to her her historic message on the duties of a virtuous woman.

Commanded by Brahmā to propagate the race, the great sage Atri, who is the most prominent among all expounders of the Vedas, repaired to the Ṛkṣa mountain with his wife Anasūyā, and devoted himself to the practice of austerities. Both Atri and his wife are great devotees of God. They performed rigorous penance and sought direct communion with God as a reward for their penance. Surrendering themselves to God, the Lord of the entire universe, they engaged themselves in constant thought of the Lord. The crown of their head emitted the fire of Yoga, which began to burn the three worlds. Pleased with their penance, the holy Trinity, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śāṅkara, simultaneously appeared before these devotees to bless them. Obtaining a direct vision of the three deities all at once, the seer and his wife had the object of their life fulfilled and they began to extol the Lord in a voice choked with emotion. The Lord insisted on their asking a boon. Having been commanded by Brahmā to procreate, Atri replied, "I invoked the Lord and sought His vision



The words 'Sapta Mahārṣayah' in Manvantara, viz., Viśvāmitra, Jamadagni, the present verse cannot be interpreted Bharaḍwāja, Gautama, Atri, Vasiṣṭha and to mean the seven seers of the present Kāśyapa, because besides Atri and

for obtaining a son, and I find all the three of You before me! You are all beyond human conception. How is it, then, that You have condescended to bless me thus? Pray tell me". Hearing these words of Atri, the three gods smiled and said, "O sage, you are of unfailing resolve. We three are the same as the object of your contemplation, three aspects of the same truth. You will have three sons, who will be part manifestations of Ourselves. As for yourself you have all your desires already fulfilled." Having uttered these words, the Trinity disappeared and thereafter incarnated themselves as the sons of Atri. A part of Bhagavān Viṣṇu appeared as Dattātreyā, a part of Brahmā took the form of Chandra (the moon-god), while a part of Śiva incarnated itself as the sage Duvāsā. Such is the glory of devotion! Those very gods who are beyond human conception assumed the forms of human children and sported in the lap of Anasūyā. (Valmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Vanakāṇḍa*, and *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, Bk. IV).

#### (4) PULASTYA

He is a great ascetic, pious and full of spiritual glow. He is an eminent Master of Yoga and a great adept in this branch of Knowledge. Once upon a time when sage Parāśara was performing a grand sacrifice with the object of extirpating the Rākṣasas, Pulastya on the advice of Vasiṣṭha requested Parāśara to stop it, and the sacrifice was stopped at the instance of Pulastya. Highly pleased with this behaviour of Parāśara, Pulastya granted him a boon whereby Parāśara acquired knowledge of all the Śāstras.

Pulastya had several sons through his wives, Sandhyā, Praticī, Priti and Havirbhū. Dattoli, more popularly known as Agastya, and the celebrated sage Nidāgha are his sons. Viśravā, the father of Kubera, Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa and Vibhiṣaṇa, is also a son of Pulastya. The various Purāṇas and the *Mahābhārata* contain numerous references to him. The Viṣṇu, Brahmavaivarta, Kūrma, Śrīmad Bhāgavata and Vāyu Purāṇas and the *Udyoga-Parva* of the *Mahābhārata*, among others, contain detailed accounts of this seer.

#### (5) PULAHA

This great seer is possessed of great prowess and wisdom. Obtaining divine knowledge from sage Sanandana, he imparted the same to sage Gautama. Through his wives, Kṣamā, daughter of Prajāpati Dakṣa and Gati, daughter of sage Kardama, he got many children (*vide* Kūrma, Viṣṇu and Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇas).

#### (6) KRATU

This great seer also possesses exceptional spiritual glow. He married Kriyā, daughter of sage Kardama, and Sannati, daughter of Prajāpati Dakṣa. He begot eight thousand Ṛṣis collectively known as the Vālakhilyas, who stand facing the sun-god near His chariot and move with the latter uttering his praises. The Purāṇas contain many references to these Ṛṣis (*vide* Śrīmad Bhāgavata, Bk. IV; *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*, Pt. I).

#### (7) VASIṢṬHA

The austerity, spiritual glow, forbearance and piety of this great seer are universally known. The Purāṇas record divergent accounts of his birth, which are all correct, relating as they do to different Kalpas or cycles of creation. The name of his wife is Arundhati, who is an exceptionally virtuous woman and the foremost of all loyal and devoted wives. Vasiṣṭha was the family priest of the kings of the Solar Race. It was the temptation of seeing with his own eyes, and living in the holy company of, Bhagavān Śrī Rāma, the ideal and perfect Man, that induced him to accept this office, and he constantly strove for the welfare of the solar race. Obtaining Śrī Rāma as his own disciple, he deemed the mission of his life as having been fulfilled.

It is said that once there was a controversy between Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra. The subject of discussion was: Which is superior—austerity or Satsaṅga (the company of holy men)? Vasiṣṭha

Vasiṣṭha none of these was born of the will either of God Himself or of Brahmā (the Creator). Therefore, instead of referring to these seven seers, the 'Sapta Maharṣayaḥ' of the present verse should be taken to mean the seers of the first Manvantara of the present Kalpa.

The words 'Chatvāraḥ Pūrve' should be taken to mean the eldest in creation, viz., Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra. They are God's own manifestations and appeared of their own will as the result of Brahmā's austere penance. Brahmā's own words with reference to them are:—

"The Lord Himself appeared in the form of the four seers, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra, who are collectively known as the four 'Sanas' (embodiments of austerity), as the result of the ceaseless penance done by me at the beginning of creation with the object of creating the different worlds.

They fully expounded the true nature of the soul, which had been lost to the world during the dissolution at the end of the preceding Kalpa, whereby seers realized the truth in their own heart." (*Śrīmad Bhāgavata* II. vii. 5)\*

Here it may be observed that Sanaka and others had no issue at all, whereas the present verse says that all these creatures in the world have descended from the seers and Manus mentioned therein. Therefore, the construction put upon the words 'Chatvāraḥ Pūrve' presents a contradiction in terms. But this contradiction is only apparent, and not real. For the Sanaka brothers, being the pioneers of the path of Renunciation (Nivṛtti), are the teachers of the whole universe. Hence all those who follow the path shown by them are in a way their disciples and may therefore be taken to be their progeny.

In the course of a cosmic day as many as fourteen Manus appear and hold office

maintained the superiority of Satsanga, while Viśvāmitra declared austerity as of greater value. Finally the question was referred to Śeṣa, the serpent-god, for arbitration. Hearing the point at issue Bhagavān Śeṣa replied, "O blessed ones, both of you can see that the weight of the entire globe rests on my head. If either of you relieves me of this burden for a short while, I may have breathing time to think over the question and settle your dispute." Viśvāmitra had great faith in his own austerities; he, therefore, sought to lift up the earth by parting with the fruit of ten thousand years of his penance, but in vain. The earth began to quake. Thereupon Vasiṣṭha easily lifted the earth by parting with the fruit of only half a second of the Satsanga practised by him, and remained standing with the load for a long time. Viśvāmitra then enquired of the arbitrator: How is it that you do not pronounce your decision even though so much time has elapsed? "O great seer!" Śeṣa smilingly replied, "the question stands decided by itself without my arbitration. When ten thousand years' penance cannot equal half-a-second's Satsanga, you can yourself decide which is superior." Knowing thus the glory of Satsanga, the two sages returned to their abodes, much delighted at heart.

Vasiṣṭha got this name because he is endowed with Vasu, or the eight Siddhis (occult powers), and is the best of all householders. The enemies of man in the shape of lust, anger, greed, infatuation etc. could not even enter the precincts of his hermitage. Though fully able to retaliate, he felt no provocation and did not inflict the least injury on Viśvāmitra, the murderer of his hundred sons. Pleased with him, Lord Śiva granted to him lordship over the Brahmans. Among those who possess true knowledge of Sanātana Dharma, the name of Vasiṣṭha deserves to be cited first of all. Detailed accounts of his life appear in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, *Devī-Bhāgavata*, the *Viṣṇu*, *Matsya*, *Vāyu*, *Śiva* and *Linga Purāṇas* and other books.

\* तप्तं तपो विविधलोकसिद्धयया मे आदौ सनात्स्वतपसः स चतुःस्रोऽभूत् ।

प्राक्कल्पसम्प्लवविनष्टमिहात्मतत्त्वं सम्यग् जगद मुनयो यदचक्षतात्मन् ॥

in succession, and the tenure of office of each Manu is called a 'Manvantara'. A Manvantara consists of a little more than seventy-one 'Chaturyugis' or rounds of the four Yugas (Satyayuga, Tretā, Dwāpara and Kaliyuga). Reckoned in human years, a Manvantara extends to 30,67,20,000 odd years; whereas according to the computation of the celestials, it consists of 8,52,000 odd years ( *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* 1.3 ).\* Each Manvantara has its own Saptarṣis or group of seven seers for regulating the operation of Dharma or the Divine Law and maintaining the universe. With the change of a Manu at the conclusion of a Manvantara, other functionaries of the universe, such as the seven seers, gods, Indra, and the sons of Manu also change. The names of the Manus of the present Kalpa are: Swāyambhuva, Swārochiṣa, Uttama, Tāmasa, Raivata, Chākṣuṣa, Vaivaswata, Sāvarṇi, Dakṣasāvarṇi, Brahmasāvarṇi,

\* According to the *Sūryasiddhānta* ( an old and authoritative treatise on Astronomy ) the duration of a Manvantara etc. has been computed as below:—

A Chaturyugī ( one full round of the Satya, Tretā, Dwāpara and Kali Yugas ) consists of 43,20,000 human years or 12,000 celestial years. This period is also called a 'Mahāyuga'. Seventy-one rounds of such Mahāyugas go to make a 'Manvantara'. A period equal in duration to a Satyayuga or 17,28,000 human years intervenes the expiration of each Manvantara and the commencement of another, and is technically known as a Sandhyā or twilight. During this Sandhyā occurring at the end of each Manvantara the earth goes under water. In every Kalpa or cosmic day there are fourteen Manvantaras with an equal number of twilights. Besides these, there is one more twilight of the same duration at the beginning of each Kalpa. In this way the fourteen Manvantaras comprised in each Kalpa consist of 71 Chaturyugis each, besides 15 twilights each of the duration of a Satyayuga. The 14 Manvantaras thus comprise in all  $14 \times 71 = 994$  Mahāyugas plus 15 twilights, which go to make another 6 Mahāyugas. In this way each Kalpa comprises  $994 + 6 = 1,000$  Mahāyugas. The following figures represent the duration of each of these divisions of time:—

|                                                                                                | Solar or human years. | Celestial years<br>or<br>the years of gods. |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| One Chaturyugī ( Mahāyuga<br>or celestial Yuga )                                               | 43,20,000             | 12,000                                      |
| Seventy-one Chaturyugis                                                                        | 30,67,20,000          | 8,52,000                                    |
| Sandhi or twilight at the<br>beginning of each Kalpa                                           | 17,28,000             | 4,800                                       |
| Fourteen Sandhyās following<br>the Manvantaras                                                 | 2,41,92,000           | 67,200                                      |
| One Manvantara with its<br>Sandhi                                                              | 30,84,48,000          | 8,56,800                                    |
| Fourteen Manvantaras with their<br>corresponding Sandhis                                       | 4,31,82,72,000        | 1,19,95,200                                 |
| Fourteen Manvantaras with the<br>twilight at the beginning of<br>each Kalpa, or one full Kalpa | 4,32,00,00,000        | 1,20,00,000                                 |

Kalpa is only another name for a cosmic day, and each cosmic day is followed by a cosmic night of the same length. The full length of Brahmā's life is a hundred years according to this measure. This period of time is technically known as a 'Para'. Having completed half of this period, Brahmā is now passing through the other half. The present time represents the first day or Kalpa of his fifty-first year. Since the beginning of this Kalpa six Manvantaras with their Sandhyās have already passed;

Dharmasāvarṇi, Rudrasāvarṇi, Devasāvarṇi, and Indrasāvarṇi.\* At the end of a Kalpa consisting of fourteen Manvantaras the entire group of Manus changes.

All these seers and Manus are full of reverence and love for God; it is for this reason that the qualification 'Madbhāvāḥ' has been used with reference to them.

Although the scriptures speak of the

seven seers as well as of Sanaka, Sanandana and others as having been born of the mind of Brahmā, the Lord refers to them here as having been born of His own will. This discrepancy can be explained by the fact that it is God Himself who assumes the form of Brahmā for the creation of the universe. Therefore, there is no contradiction when the Lord speaks of those born of Brahmā's mind as having been born of His own will.

*The next verse proceeds to declare the reward of knowing the glory and manifestations of God described in the preceding five verses.*

एतां विभूर्तिं योगं च मम यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।

सोऽविकम्पेन योगेन युज्यते नात्र संशयः ॥ ७ ॥

यः who; मम Mine; एताम् this; विभूर्तिम् supreme divine glory; च and; योगम् supernatural power; तत्त्वतः in reality; वेत्ति knows; सः he; अविकम्पेन योगेन through unfaltering devotion; युज्यते gets established (in Me); अत्र about this; संशयः न there is no doubt.

He who knows in reality this supreme divine glory and supernatural power of Mine gets established in Me through unfaltering Devotion; of this there is no doubt. (7)

The word 'Vibhūtim', with the demonstrative adjective 'Etām' qualifying it, covers entities like Buddhi (the faculty of determining the nature of things) etc. and great seers and others declared by the Lord in the preceding three verses as emanating from Him, as well as the objects, abstract ideas and gods referred to by Him in such statements as "I am the sapidity in water

(VII. 8)" and "I am the Vedic ritual, I am the sacrifice (IX. 16)" and so on.

And the word 'Yogam' stands for that transcendent and marvellous power of God, the secret of which is not fully known either to the gods or to the great sages (X. 2, 3); which accounts for the fact that, though Himself both the material and instrumental cause of entities born

whereas the number of Sandhyās, including the one occurring at the beginning of the Kalpa, that have elapsed so far is seven. The present is the seventh or Vaivasvata Manvantara, of which 27 Chaturyugas have passed. We are now passing through the twilight at the beginning of the Kaliyuga of the 28th Chaturyuga. (Sūryasiddhānta, Madhyamādhikāra, 15 to 24)

Up to the present year (Samvat year 2004 of the Vikrama Era) Kaliyuga has completed 5,048 years. The Sandhyā occurring at the beginning of each Kaliyuga extends to 36,000 years. According to this calculation 30,952 years of the Sandhyā itself remain to be completed.

\*For a detailed account of these Manus see Chapters 1, 5 and 13 of BK. VIII, of Śrīmad Bhāgavata. Their names slightly vary in the various Purāṇas. The names given here have been taken from the Bhāgavata.

of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, He always remains apart from them, justifying the statement "neither I exist in them, nor they in Me (VII. 12);" by dint of which, while carrying on the creation, maintenance and destruction etc. of the whole universe He governs the entire creation according to certain definite laws; which makes Him the supreme Lord of all the worlds, the disinterested friend of all beings, the enjoyer of all sacrifices and other noble acts, the sustainer of all and all-powerful; by which He holds the entire universe in a fraction of His being (X. 42) and manifests Himself of His own free will, age after age, in various forms for various purposes and while doing all this remains entirely aloof from all actions, from the entire creation and from all transformations, such as birth etc.; and which has been spoken of in IX. 5 as His wonderful power of divine Yoga.

In this way the entire universe is God's own creation, and everything subsists in a fraction of His being. Therefore, whatever object in the world appears

as endowed with power and has some speciality about it, or better still the whole creation, should be regarded as a manifestation of, or the same as, God; while God Himself should be recognized as the creator and destroyer of the entire universe, the almighty and universal lord, the sustainer of all, supremely compassionate, the disinterested friend and inner controller of all. This is what is meant by 'knowing in reality the supreme glory and supernatural power of God'.

The word 'Yogena' accompanied by the adjective 'Avikampena' qualifying it, stands for that unflinching and exclusive devotion to God (*vide* Gītā XI. 54) which is also named as 'undivided devotion' in XIII. 10 and as 'the Yoga of exclusive devotion' in XIV. 26, which has been referred to in VII. 1 under the name of 'Yoga', and the character of which has been discussed in verses 13, 14 and 34 of Chapter IX and in verse 9 of the present chapter. And realizing God through such devotion is what is meant by getting united with, or established in, God.

*Having spoken of God-Realization through the practice of unfaltering devotion, the Lord now discusses in two verses the character of this Yoga of Devotion.*

अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते ।

इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः ॥ ८ ॥

अहम् I (the soul of the universe); सर्वस्य of all; प्रभवः (am) the source; मत्तः (and) because of Me; सर्वम् everything (in the world); प्रवर्तते moves; इति thus; मत्वा knowing; भावसमन्विताः full of devotion; बुधाः the wise; माम् Me (the supreme Deity); भजन्ते (constantly) worship.

I am the source of all creation and everything in the world moves because of Me; knowing thus the wise, full of devotion, constantly worship Me. (8)

The whole universe has emanated from God; hence God is both the material and efficient cause of the entire creation, and therefore the best of all. To recognize this fact is to know that He is the source of all creation.

The wheel of this creation is revolving through God's own power of Yoga; it is through His ruling power that the sun, moon, stars and planets like the earth are regularly coursing within their respective orbits; it is under His direction that all

living beings are working out their own destiny after being born in the higher or lower order of creation according to their good or evil actions. In this way to recognize God as the ruler and director of all is to know that everything in the world moves because of God.

The word 'Budhāḥ', qualified by the adjective 'Bhāvasamanvitāḥ', stands for those enlightened devotees who are full of exclusive love for God, have unflinching

faith in Him and are solely devoted to Him, and who have full knowledge of His virtues and glory.

Thus recognizing God as the creator, destroyer and director of the entire universe he who constantly remembers and embraces the Lord through the mind, intellect and senses, with utmost faith and love, as described in the following verse, is said to worship Him according to the spirit of the present verse.

मच्चित्ता मद्गतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम् ।

कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ॥ ९ ॥

मच्चित्ता: those who keep their mind fixed on Me; च and; मद्गतप्राणा: those who have surrendered their lives to Me; परस्परम् बोधयन्तः enlightening one another (about My greatness); च and; माम् Me; कथयन्तः speaking of; नित्यम् ever; तुष्यन्ति remain contented; च and; रमन्ति take delight (in Me).

With their mind fixed on Me, and their lives surrendered to Me, enlightening one another about My greatness and speaking of Me, My devotees ever remain contented and take delight in Me. (9)

The word 'Matchittāḥ' refers to those devotees who, knowing God as their supreme lover and greatest friend, nay, their nearest and dearest one and highest goal, have their mind exclusively fixed on Him (VIII. 14; IX. 22); who have no attraction, attachment or love for anything else than God; who are ever engrossed in the thought of His Name, virtues, glory, sports and being; and who, even while acting in accordance with the scriptural injunctions and performing ordinary functions of the body, much less at the time of meditation, never forget God even for a moment.

And the word 'Madgataprāṇāḥ' has been used with reference to those who live and breathe solely and entirely for God and whose senses also function for His sake alone; to whom even a moment's separation from God is unbearable; who eats and drinks, walks and moves, sleeps

and keeps awake, and carries on all other activities for His sake alone, and has no personal interest in those activities.

Loving and faithful devotees of God fondly indulge in discussing with, and bringing home to, one another the virtues, glory, truth, sports and mysteries of God on the basis of their personal experiences and arguing their case with great skill. This is what is meant by enlightening one another about the greatness of God.

Reciting and chanting God's names, virtues, glory, stories and character and popularizing them through sermons and discourses and offering praises to God etc. are all included in speaking of God.

Feeling supreme gratification in doing all this is what is meant by 'ever remaining contented'. Hearing, reflecting on, chanting and reciting the names, virtues, glory, stories and character etc. of God are solely responsible for the peace, joy

and gratification enjoyed by the devotee who remains ever contented as mentioned above. Worldly objects have nothing to do with his joy and gratification.

Duly hearing, reflecting on and chanting the names, virtues, glory, stories, character, truth and mysteries of God, and doing everything according to His

liking, behest and direction for the sole object of developing love for Him, such a devotee ever visualizes Him as actually present before his eyes, and constantly enjoys His sight and touch, chats with Him and carries on various other sports with Him. This is what is meant by ever taking delight in God.

*The Lord now tells us in the next two verses how He rewards the devotees who adore Him in the above manner.*

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।

ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥ १० ॥

तेषाम् on those; सततयुक्तानाम् ever united (through meditation etc. with Me); प्रीतिपूर्वकम् with love; भजताम् worshipping (Me); तम् that; बुद्धियोगम् Yoga of wisdom; ददामि I confer; येन through which; माम् Me; ते they; उपयान्ति come to.

On those ever united through meditation with Me and worshipping Me with love, I confer that Yoga of wisdom through which they come to Me. (10)

The demonstrative pronoun 'Teṣām' stands for the loving and disinterested devotees of God referred to in the preceding verse as 'Budhāḥ' and 'Matchittāḥ' etc. Similarly, the adjective 'Satatayuktānām' represents the aggregate of all the qualifications mentioned in the preceding verse such as 'Matchittāḥ', 'Madgataprāṇāḥ', 'Parasparam Bodhayantaḥ' and 'Mām Kathayantaḥ'. Again, the idea conveyed by the words 'Tuṣyanti cha ramanti cha' is succinctly expressed in 'Pritipūrvakam Bhajatām'. The intention is to convey that the devotees referred to in the preceding verse, far from worshipping God out of any desire for enjoyment, constantly adore Him in the manner stated in the preceding verse,

disinterestedly and with exclusive love, without seeking any return for their devotion.\*

The Lord infuses into the mind of His devotees the capacity to grasp correctly the truth relating to the absolute, formless Divinity along with the secret of Its glory and greatness, as also the truth relating to His qualified aspect with and without form along with His sports, mysteries, greatness and glory etc. This is what is meant by 'conferring the Yoga of wisdom'. It is this Buddhiyoga which has been spoken of in Chapters VII and IX above as 'Jñāna coupled with Vijñāna'; and direct realization of God through this Yoga of wisdom is what is meant by attaining Him.

\* A devotee of this type says in the *Bhāgavata*:—

न नाकपृष्ठं न महेन्द्रशिख्यं न सार्वभौमं न रसाधिपत्यम् ।

न योगसिद्धीरपुनर्भवं वा समञ्जसं त्वा विरह्य काङ्क्षे ॥

(VI. xi. 25)

"O all-virtuous Lord! without Thee I seek neither abode in the uppermost heaven nor the position of Brahmā (the Creator), neither sovereignty over the entire globe nor dominion over the nether worlds, neither the achievements of Yoga nor even lasting freedom from rebirth."

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।

नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥ ११ ॥

तेषाम् अनुकम्पार्थम् in order to shower My grace on them; अहम् I; एव Myself; आत्मभावस्थः dwelling in their heart; अज्ञानजम् born of ignorance; तमः the darkness; भास्वता ज्ञानदीपेन by the shining light of wisdom; नाशयामि dispel.

In order to shower My grace on them I, dwelling in their heart, dispel the darkness born of ignorance by the shining light of wisdom. ( 11 )

By the statement that the Lord Himself dispels the darkness of ignorance of the devotee, He seeks to convey that the devotee need not undertake any other Sādhana for the purpose. The object is achieved through the mercy of God alone.

The word 'Tamaḥ', qualified by the adjective 'Ajñānajaṁ', stands for the veiling power of ignorance that has existed from time without beginning, and due to which man fails to realize the virtues, glory and character of God. By the statement "dwelling in the heart I dispel their ignorance" the Lord reveals the glory of devotion and exculpates Himself from the charge of partiality. The Lord thereby seeks to convey that He constantly resides in the heart of all as their Inner Controller and yet people do not feel His presence within their heart; that is why He fails to dispel the ignorance of their heart. His loving devotees, however, as indicated in the preceding verse, constantly see Him as if actually present in their heart; it is therefore that He easily dispels the darkness of their ignorance.

The word 'Jñānadīpena', with the adjective 'Bhāswatā' qualifying it, signifies that transcendent wisdom, free from the faults of doubt and error etc., which has been spoken of as 'Buddhiyoga' or the Yoga of wisdom in the preceding verse, and as 'Jñāna coupled with Vijñāna' in Chapters VII and IX, and whereby one is able to know full well the truth relating to the absolute, formless Divinity along with Its grandeur and glory, as well as that relating to the qualified aspect of God with and without form along with His sports, mysteries, glory and greatness etc. And to dispel the darkness of ignorance through such wisdom is to tear away from the heart of the devotee the veil of ignorance which obstructs the knowledge of Truth.

As a matter of fact, the light of wisdom dispels the darkness of ignorance and brings God-Realization at the same time. If, however, some sequence is maintained between the two processes, it should be understood that the removal of ignorance takes place earlier and is immediately followed by God-Realization.

*The Lord discussed in Chapter VII the subject which He introduced in the very opening verse of that chapter as leading to a knowledge of His integral Self, and which He undertook in the next verse to expound under the name of 'Jñāna and Vijñāna', or the knowledge of the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of God. Thereafter, in Chapter VIII, He threw further light on the same subject even while answering the seven questions of Arjuna. But since His method of exposition was different in that chapter, He undertook once more at the beginning of Chapter IX to discuss the subject of Jñāna and Vijñāna, and expounded it at full length in all its details. Again, in order to elucidate the subject further and*



in a different language the Lord undertook in the opening verse of Chapter X to discuss the subject again; and having devoted the next five verses to a description of His Yogic power and glories He declared in the seventh that knowledge of the latter leads to His own realization through unfaltering Devotion. Thereafter, describing in the eighth and the ninth the mental attitude and conduct of those engaged in worshipping Him through the discipline of Bhakti, the Lord wound up the topic by pointing out in the tenth and eleventh the fruit of such worship, viz., the attainment of the Yoga of wisdom, which dispels the darkness of ignorance and leads to God-Realization. Thereupon, realizing that knowledge of the Yogic power and glories of God is exceedingly helpful in God-Realization, Arjuna now devotes the next seven verses to praises of the Lord, praying in the end that the Lord may be pleased to describe in detail His own Yogic power and glories.

अर्जुन उवाच

परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं भवान् ।  
 पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवमजं विभुम् ॥ १२ ॥  
 आहुस्त्वामृषयः सर्वे देवर्षिर्नारदस्तथा ।  
 असितो देवलो व्यासः स्वयं चैव ब्रवीषि मे ॥ १३ ॥

भवान् You; परम् ब्रह्म ( are ) the transcendent Eternal; परम् धाम the supreme Abode; परमम् पवित्रम् ( and ) the greatest purifier; त्वाम् You; सर्वे all; ऋषयः the seers; शाश्वतम् दिव्यम् पुरुषम् ( as ) the eternal divine Puruṣa; आदिदेवम् the primal Deity; अजम् unborn; विभुम् ( and ) all-pervading; आहुः speak of; तथा even so; देवर्षिः नारदः the celestial sage Nārada; असितः देवलः the sages Asita and Devala; व्यासः the great sage Vyāsa; च and; स्वयम् एव Yourself too; मे to Me; ब्रवीषि proclaim.

Arjuna said: You are the transcendent Eternal, the supreme Abode and the greatest purifier; all the seers speak of You as the eternal divine Puruṣa, the primal Deity, unborn and all-pervading. Likewise speak the celestial sage Nārada, the sages Asita and Devala and the great sage Vyāsa; and Yourself too proclaim this to me. ( 12,13 )

By the first half of the twelfth verse is the same as Śrī Kṛṣṇa; and that His Arjuna intends to say that the Absolute names, virtues, glory, stories and character, known as the 'transcendent Eternal' is when heard, reflected on and chanted, is no other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa; that His supreme are supremely purifying in every way. Abode too, being the embodiment of

The word 'Rṣayah', qualified by the adjective 'Sarve', stands for Rṣis like Mārkaṇḍeya, Angirā and so on, whom

\* ऋषीत्येष गतौ धातुः श्रुतौ सत्ये तपस्य । एतत् संनियतं यस्मिन् ब्रह्मणा स ऋषिः स्मृतः ॥  
 गत्यर्थादृषतेर्धातोर्नामनिर्वृत्तिरादितः । यस्मादेष स्वयम्भूतस्तस्माच्च ऋषिता स्मृता ॥

( Vāyu-Purāṇa LIX. 79, 81 )

"The root 'Ṛṣ' is used in the senses of motion ( knowledge ), hearing, truth and austerity. Brahṁā, the Creator, has given the title of 'Ṛṣi' to him who definitely combines in himself all these virtues. The word is derived from the root 'Ṛṣ' signifying motion, and the name of Ṛṣi has been given to these seers because they were born of themselves in the beginning of creation."

Arjuna mentions as the authority for his statement.\*

surrounded by Ṛṣis, are all Devarṣis.†”  
(*Vāyu-Purāṇa*, LXI. 88,90,91,92)

The following are the marks of a Devarṣi or celestial sage:—

There are many Devarṣis, the names of some of whom are given below:—

“Seers living in the celestial regions should be known as the blessed Devarṣis. Besides them, there are other Devarṣis as well who are distinguished by their knowledge of the past, present and future and strict adherence to truth. In other words, celestials, Brahmans, and members of the royal class who are self-illuminated and have established contact with the world of their own free will, who are famed throughout the world for their austerity, who have imparted spiritual knowledge to devotees (like Prahlāda) even in their mother's womb, who are the revealers of Mantras or sacred formulas, who by virtue of their supernatural powers (Siddhis) have unrestricted access everywhere, and are ever

देवर्षी धर्मपुत्रौ तु नरनारायणाबुभौ ।  
वालखिल्याः क्रतोः पुत्राः कर्दमः पुलहस्य तु ॥  
पर्वतो नारदश्चैव कश्यपस्यात्मजाबुभौ ।  
ऋषन्ति देवान् यस्मात्ते तस्माद्देवर्षयः स्मृताः ॥

(*Vāyu-Purāṇa* LX 83-85)

“The two sons of Dharma, Nara and Nārāyaṇa, Kratu's sons, collectively known as the Vālakhilyas, Kardama, son of Pulaha, Parvata, Nārada and the two sons of Kaśyapa, Asita and Vatsara, because they can exercise control even over the celestials, are called Devarṣis.”

Devarṣi Nārada, Asita, Devala and Vyāsa—all these great Ṛṣis know of the real truth about God, and are great lovers and devotees of God, and possessed

\* Describing the glory of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Duryodhana, the patriarch Bhiṣma, the great embodiment of truth and virtue, said:—

“Bhagavān Vāsudeva (son of Vasudeva) is the object of worship of all gods and the best of all beings. He is virtue personified and the knower of the secret of Dharma, the bestower of boons and the satisfier of all desires; He is the doer, the deed and the Lord Himself. The past, present and future, the morning and evening twilights, the four quarters, the heavens and all laws are the creations of this very Lord. It is this high-souled and imperishable Lord who created the Ṛṣis, austerity and the Prajāpatis, who have brought forth the entire creation. He is the Creator of Sankarṣaṇa himself, the eldest of all creation. Śeṣa (the serpent-god), popularly known as ‘Ananta’ (the eternal being), who carries the weight of the entire globe including the mountains on his head, also emanated from Him. It is He who takes the form of the divine Boar, the Man-Lion, and the divine Dwarf; He is the father and mother of all. There is none superior to Him. ‘Keśava’ as He is called, He is the embodiment of supreme lustre and the grandfather of all beings; the seers call Him Hṛṣīkeśa. He is the teacher, the forefather and the preceptor. He who wins the favour of Śrī Kṛṣṇa attains the imperishable abode. He who, when confronted with danger, seeks refuge in Śrī Kṛṣṇa and offers praises to Him attains supreme happiness.”

ये च कृष्णं प्रपद्यन्ते ते न मुह्यन्ति मानवाः । भये महति मद्भांश्च पाति नित्यं जनार्दनः ॥

(*Mahābhārata*, Bhiṣma-Parva, LXVII. 24)

“Those who take refuge in Śrī Kṛṣṇa never get deluded. Śrī Kṛṣṇa ever protects those who are involved in great danger.”

† देवलोकप्रतिष्ठाश्च ज्ञेया देवर्षयः शुभाः ॥

देवर्षयस्तथान्ये च तेषां वक्ष्यामि लक्षणम् । भूतमन्यभवाज्ज्ञानं सत्याभिव्याहृतं तथा ॥  
सम्बुद्धास्तु स्वयं ये तु सम्बुद्धा ये च वै स्वयम् । तपसेह प्रसिद्धा ये गर्भे यैश्च प्रणोदितम् ॥  
मन्त्रव्याहारिणो ये च ऐश्वर्यात् सर्वगाश्च ये । इत्येते ऋषिभिर्मुक्ता देवद्विजनृपास्तु ये ॥

of supreme wisdom.\* They are regarded as highly respected and truthful sages of their time; that is why their names have been specially mentioned in the verse. And, moreover, they are ever engaged in singing the praises of God. The chief mission of their life is to propagate the glory of God. The *Mahābhārata* too contains several references to these and many other Ṛṣis and Mahārṣis singing the glories of God. The patriarch Bhīṣma recapitulates in the *Bhīṣma-Parva* what

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\* Though there have been more than one persons bearing the name of Nārada, history records no two Devarṣis of this name. The scriptures speak of him as the 'mind' of God. Possessing supreme knowledge of the divine Truth and supreme love for God, he is a celibate of the order known as Ūrdhvarētās (so-called because their generative fluid or creative energy has attained an upward flow). He is the foremost teacher of Bhakti or Devotion. The world owes a great deal to him. It was he who inspired great devotees like Prahlāda, Dhruva and Ambarīṣa, and showed them the way to Bhakti; and the world further owes to him two incomparable gems of Indian literature, viz., *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmiki. It was he who imparted instruction even to a man of great spiritual wisdom like Śrī Śukadeva.

In his previous incarnation, Nārada was the son of a maid-servant who used to scour the unclean utensils of great sages. When he was only five years of age, his mother died of an accident. Thus freed from all worldly ties, he left all human habitation and retired into the woods, where he sat under the foot of a big tree and began to meditate on God. In the course of this meditation, his thoughts got focussed on one point and the Lord revealed Himself in his heart. But having blessed him with a glimpse of His soul-enchancing beauty for a short while, He suddenly disappeared from his view. Feeling greatly disturbed at His sudden disappearance, he concentrated his mind once more and began to meditate on the Lord, but failed to obtain His vision any more. Meanwhile he heard an ethereal voice say, "O child, you will not be blessed with My vision any more in your present incarnation. Having cast off this mortal coil you will attain Me as one of My own associates." These words of the Lord brought him great consolation, and he moved about in the world, free from attachment, awaiting the last moment. At the appointed hour he left his physical body, and in the next Kalpa he assumed a divine form and was reborn from the mind of Brahmā. Since then, observing a vow of unbroken celibacy, he has been singing the praises of the Lord to the accompaniment of his lute ( *Bhāgavata* I. vi ).

Chapter V of *Mahābhārata*, *Sabhā-Parva*, contains the following account of Devarṣi Nārada:—

"Devarṣi Nārada knows the real meaning of the Vedas and Upaniṣads, is adored by the celestials, has specialized in the branch of literature known as the Itihāsas and Purāṇas, possesses knowledge of the events of the previous Kalpas, knows the essence of virtue and justice and is the best scholar of Śikṣā (phonetics), Kalpa (the science of ritual), Vyākaraṇa (grammar), Āyurveda (the science of medicine) and other branches. Nay, he is an expert in reconciling scriptural injunctions of a contradictory nature, a powerful orator, well-versed in politics, possessed of great intelligence, memory and wisdom, a poet, clever in distinguishing good from evil, capable of ascertaining the reality of things by employing the various methods of reasoning, proficient in discovering the beauties and fallacies of syllogistic reasoning and capable of meeting the objections of scholars like Bṛhaspati. He knows in reality the truth about Dharma (religious merit), Artha (worldly riches), Kāma (enjoyment) and Mokṣa (liberation), is capable of directly perceiving by his Yogic power every incident taking place in this world as well as in the higher and lower worlds, clever in distinguishing the paths of Knowledge and Action, expert in giving lessons to the gods and demons on dispassion, a master statesman proficient in the knowledge of war and peace, an adept in determining what should be done and what should not be done, incomparable in the employment of the six expedients of royal policy, well-versed in all the scriptures, and well-versed in the science of warfare, a master of music, a great devotee of God,



V. 29; VII. 7 to 12; IX. 4 to 11, and 16 him. Arjuna is, therefore, convinced that to 19; and X. 2, 3, 8. This is what what he says in these verses about Śrī Arjuna has in mind when he says that Kṛṣṇa is, quite correct, and he has no Śrī Kṛṣṇa is revealing His own glory to doubt about it.

सर्वमेतदतं मन्ये यन्मां वदसि केशव ।

न हि ते भगवन्व्यक्तिं विदुर्देवा न दानवाः ॥ १४ ॥

केशव O Kṛṣṇa; यत् what; माम् me; वदसि You tell; एतत् सर्वम् all that; ऋतम् (as) true; मन्ये I believe; भगवन् O Lord; ते Your; व्यक्तिम् manifestation (through sport); न neither; दानवाः demons; न nor; हि indeed; देवाः gods; विदुः know.

Kṛṣṇa, I believe as true all that You tell me. Lord, neither demons nor gods are aware of Your manifestation through sport. ( 14 )

Sanat Kumāra and others said, "His head pervades the heavens and His arms cover the earth; all the three worlds are contained in His belly. He is the eternal Puruṣa. The practican can know Him only after attaining purification of the heart. He is considered to be the Best even among seers who are sated through Self-Realization; and He is the ultimate resort even of the lofty-minded royal sages, who never turn their back on the field of battle ( *Mahā., Bhīṣma., Chap. 68* ).

In Chapter XII of the *Mahābhārata, Vana-Parva*, the great devotee among women, Draupadī, quotes the following words of a number of sages:—

The sages Asita and Devala said, "Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself is the Prajāpati ( the lord of creation ) during the primal creation of beings, and is the sole creator of all the worlds."

Paraśurāma said, "He is Viṣṇu Himself; none can vanquish Him. He is the sacrifice, the sacrificer and the deity worshipped through sacrifice."

Nārada said, "He is the supreme Lord of all deities known as the Sādhyas, as well as of all blessings."

"Just as a child plays at will with its dolls, so does Śrī Kṛṣṇa sport in the company of Brahmā, Śiva, Indra and the other gods."

Beside the above, Bhagavān Vyāsa says in the *Mahābhārata*:—

"There is a sacred town in Saurāṣṭra ( the modern Kathiawad ), named Dwārakā, wherein resides Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the most ancient and supreme Puruṣa. He is Sanātana Dharma personified. Brahmans well-versed in the Vedas and men who have realized the Self declare high-souled Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be Sanātana Dharma itself. He is the most sacred of all sacred objects, the holiest of the holy, and the most auspicious of all auspicious things. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, possessed of lotus-like eyes, is the eternal god of all the gods in the three worlds. He is the imperishable soul and perishable matter, the conscious self, the supreme Lord and one endowed with a form which is beyond human conception." ( *Mahā., Vana., 88. 24 to 27* )

In *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* Devarṣi Nārada, addressing the pious king Yudhiṣṭhira, says, "O king, of all men you are indeed highly blessed, inasmuch as sages who lend sanctity to the worlds frequently visit your palaces, and the supreme Brahma Himself lives here in the guise of a human being. Indeed, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the supreme Brahma whom sages seek to realize as the bliss of absolute repose. He is your beloved friend, your maternal cousin, the object of your worship, your Guide and Teacher. Tell me, then, who can compare with you in the matter of good luck?" ( *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* VII. xv. 75-76 ).

The monosyllabic word 'Ka' represents Brahmā (the Creator), 'A' signifies Viṣṇu (the Protector) and 'Īśa' is a synonym of Śiva (Destroyer of the universe). Keśava, therefore, is the Deity who represents all these three aspects of God. Addressing Śrī Kṛṣṇa as 'Keśava' in this verse, Arjuna, therefore, intends to convey that unquestionably He is the Supreme Lord responsible for the creation, sustenance and destruction of the whole universe.

The pronouns 'Ētat' and 'Yat', used in this verse, point to all that has been stated by the Lord from the beginning of Chapter VII to verse 11 of the present Chapter regarding His own virtues, glory, character, greatness, mystery and supernatural powers etc., and which constitutes a direct admission on His part of His divinity. And recognizing Śrī Kṛṣṇa as God Himself, the integral Brahma, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, the god of gods, the creator and destroyer of the universe, all-sustaining, all-pervading and omnipotent, the ruler and inner controller of all, and not entertaining the least doubt about the truth of His statements is what is meant by believing all that He says as true.

The *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* says:—

ऐश्वर्यस्य समग्रस्य धर्मस्य यशसः श्रियः ।

ज्ञानवैराग्ययोश्चैव वृण्णां भग इतीरणा ॥

( VI. v. 74 )

"Entire glory, entire virtue, entire renown, entire prosperity, entire wisdom and total dispassion—these six are collectively known as 'Bhaga'."

He who combines in Himself all these virtues is called 'Bhagavān'.

The *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* further says:—

उत्पत्तिं प्रलयं चैव भूतानामगतिं गतिम् ।

वेत्ति विद्यामविद्यां च स वाच्यो भगवानिति ॥

( VI. v. 78 )

"He who is aware of the creation and dissolution of the universe, of the appearance and disappearance of beings, as well as of Vidyā ( wisdom ) and Avidyā (nescience), should be designated as 'Bhagavān'."

By addressing Śrī Kṛṣṇa as 'Bhagavān', Arjuna means to say that He is God Himself, the repository of all glory and omniscient.

The word 'Vyaktim' denotes all the various forms assumed by God by way of sport from time to time for the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe, for the rehabilitation of virtue, for redeeming the devotees by blessing them with His sight, for the protection of gods and destruction of the demons, and for various other reasons. By saying that the secret of His manifestation in various forms is known neither to the demons nor to the gods Arjuna intends to convey that even though the demons are endowed with the capacity to assume various forms by dint of their Māyā or conjuring power and the gods are capable of perceiving supersensuous objects, yet they are unable to perceive the divine character of His various forms, or to comprehend His divine power, and art of assuming those forms, the occasion for such manifestation and the inwardness of His sports. Much less can an ordinary mortal expect to know these things.

स्वयमेवात्मनाऽऽत्मानं वेत्थ त्वं पुरुषोत्तम ।

भूतभावन भूतेश देवदेव जगत्पते ॥ १५ ॥

भूतभावन O creator of beings; भूतेश O Ruler of all creatures; देवदेव O god of gods; जगत्पते O Lord of the universe; पुरुषोत्तम O supreme Puruṣa;

त्वम् You; स्वयम् एव Yourself; आत्मना by Yourself; आत्मानम् Yourself; वेत्थ know.

O Creator of beings, O Ruler of creatures, god of gods, the Lord of the universe, O supreme Puruṣa, You alone know what You are by Yourself. (15)

By the vocatives used in this verse for Śrī Kṛṣṇa Arjuna seeks to convey that He is the creator of the whole universe, the controller and supporter of all, the object of universal adoration and higher than perishable matter and the imperishable soul known as His 'Aparā' and 'Parā' natures respectively.

Again, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the beginning of the entire creation; His virtues, glory, sports, greatness, and forms etc. are all

infinite. Hence no one else can have full knowledge of His virtues etc.; they are known to Him and Him alone. And His knowledge of His own self is not like the knowledge of an external object acquired by an individual through his or her intellect, and with the help of the scriptures etc. God being the very embodiment of knowledge, He knows Himself through Himself. There is no distinction of knower, knowledge and the object of knowledge in Him.

वक्तुमर्हस्यशेषेण दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः ।

याभिर्विमृतिभिर्लोकानिमांस्त्वं व्याप्य तिष्ठसि ॥ १६ ॥

हि therefore: त्वम् You (alone); दिव्या: आत्मविभूतयः Your divine glories; अशेषेण in full: वक्तुम् अर्हसि are able to describe; याभिः विमृतिभिः by which glories; इमान् लोकान् (all) these worlds; व्याप्य pervading; तिष्ठसि You stand.

Therefore, You alone can describe in full Your divine glories, whereby You stand pervading all these worlds. (16)

The word 'Ātmavibhūṭayah', qualified by the adjective 'Divyāḥ', covers all those objects or beings in the universe that are possessed of lustre, strength, learning, glory, virtue and power. Since all those glories are God's own manifestations and because no one other than He knows them in their entirety, He alone and no one else can describe them in full. This is what Arjuna means by the first half of this

verse. Again, by the latter half of the verse Arjuna seeks to convey that he would not be contented with a description of only those glories which are manifested in this mortal world alone, but that he should like to hear a full account of all His glories by which He stands revealed in various forms in all the worlds including the celestial regions.

. कथं विद्यामहं योगिस्त्वां सदा परिचिन्तयन् ।

केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन्मया ॥ १७ ॥

योगिन् O Master of Yoga; अहम् I; कथम् how; सदा ever; परिचिन्तयन् meditating on; त्वाम् You; विद्याम् may know; च and; भगवन् O Lord; केषु केषु भावेषु in what particular forms; मया by me; चिन्त्यः असि You are to be meditated upon.

O Master of Yoga, through what process of continuous meditation shall I know You? And in what particular forms, O Lord, are You to be meditated upon by me? (17)

Arjuna puts two questions to the Lord in the present verse. Firstly, he seeks to know some device whereby he may be able to practise constant remembrance of the Lord with faith and love, and may know Him fully well along with His virtues, glory and reality. And, secondly, he is anxious to be told which particular objects, forming part of this universe

of sentient and insentient beings should be taken to be His manifestations and meditated upon as such. In other words, Arjuna wants to know how and in what particular forms he should constantly think of Him so as to be able to comprehend His virtues, glory, truth and secrets easily.

विस्तरेणात्मनो योगं विभूर्ति च जनार्दन ।

भूयः कथय तृप्तिर्हि शृण्वतो नास्ति मेऽमृतम् ॥ १८ ॥

जनार्दन O Kṛṣṇa; आत्मनः Your; योगम् power of Yoga; च and; विभूर्तिम् glory; भूयः 'once more; विस्तरेण in detail; कथय tell me; हि because; अमृतम् Your nectar-like words; शृण्वतः (in) hearing; मे to me; तृप्तिः satiety; न अस्ति is not.

Kṛṣṇa, tell me once more in detail Your power of Yoga and Your glory; for I know no satiety in hearing Your nectar-like words. (18)

He of whom all men seek their desired objects is called Janārdana (जनैः अर्चते). By addressing Śrī Kṛṣṇa as 'Janārdana,' Arjuna indicates that all men approach Him for the attainment of their desired objects, and also that He is fully capable of granting all their prayers. Arjuna thereby hopes that his prayer too will be granted by the Lord.

'Yoga' is that divine potency of God by which He manifests Himself in the form of this universe and thereby reproduces Himself in various forms; and His manifestation in those forms is called His 'Vibhūti' or glory. Both these words have already occurred in verse 7 above, and their meaning has been fully explained in our commentary on the same. Realization of God through unfaltering devotion has been mentioned in that verse as the reward

of knowing His Yoga and Vibhūti in reality. Therefore, with a view to knowing full well the secret of His Yoga and Vibhūti, Arjuna requests the Lord to describe them in detail again and again.

The words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa appear very sweet to Arjuna; he finds such a stream of joy flowing from them that his mind never gets wearied of drinking of it. The more he drinks of that nectar, the more his thirst for the same grows. He feels as if he should go on drinking that nectar for ever. Therefore, he prays that Śrī Kṛṣṇa should go on pouring that divine nectar into his ever thirsty ears. He should not feel deterred by the thought that such and such a thing has already been said or that the subject has been amply thrashed out so that there is no need to dilate on it any more.



*In response to this prayer of Arjuna for a detailed and full description of His power of Yoga and glory, the Lord first points out the limitless range of His magnitude and then undertakes to describe only His outstanding glories.*

श्रीभगवानुवाच

हन्त ते कथयिष्यामि दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः ।

प्राधान्यतः कुरुश्रेष्ठ नास्त्यन्तो विस्तरस्य मे ॥ १९ ॥

कुरुश्रेष्ठ O chief of Kurus, Arjuna; हन्त now; दिव्याः आत्मविभूतयः My divine glories; ते to you; प्राधान्यतः in broad detail; कथयिष्यामि shall relate; हि because; मे विस्तरस्य to My magnitude; अन्तः limit; न अस्ति there is not.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Arjuna, now I shall tell you My conspicuous divine glories; for there is no limit to My magnitude. ( 19 )

By addressing Arjuna as 'Kuruśreṣṭha', in this verse that they are limitless, so the Lord seeks to convey that, being the best among Kurus, he was qualified to hear the description of His glories. that it was wholly impossible to describe them all in full. Hence He undertakes to describe only the most conspicuous among them.

The whole universe being a manifestation of God, all objects comprised therein are, in a general way, manifestations of His glory; but they are not His divine glories. The words 'divine glories' should be taken to denote only such objects or beings which manifest the majesty, strength, learning, glory, lustre and power of God in a special degree. With reference to such glories the Lord says

In the preceding verse Arjuna requested the Lord to describe in detail (in full) His power of Yoga as well as His glory. With reference to this prayer the Lord says that it was not possible to give a full description of even His outstanding glories, much less of all His glories.\*

\* The universe consists of an infinite number of objects and an infinite variety of creatures. For their proper regulation and control these diverse orders of objects, ideas and beings have been classified into various broad divisions or groups under God's immutable laws; and each broad division or group has been placed under the control of a supervisor or chief, so that the processes of their creation, maintenance and destruction may be carried on strictly according to law. The Rudras, Vasus, Ādityas, Sādhyas, Viśwadevas, Maruts, Pitṛdevas, Manus and Saptarṣis etc. are the various orders of these functionaries or chiefs. They are believed to have both an embodied and unembodied form. All of them represent so many glories of God.

The *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* says:—

सर्वे च देवा मनवः समस्ताः सप्तर्षी ये मनुसूनवश्च । इन्द्रश्च योऽयं त्रिदशेशभूतो विष्णोरशेषास्तु विभूतयस्ताः ॥

( III. 1. 46 )

"All the gods, all Manus, the seven seers, as well as the sons of Manus, and Indra, the chief of gods,—all these are special manifestations or glories of Bhagavān Viṣṇu."

Besides the above, special representatives are duly chosen from the various orders of creations for the proper functioning of creation. In this selection, the choice particularly falls on those who manifest God's lustre, energy, strength, learning, knowledge and power in a special degree. It is therefore that the Lord speaks of them all as His glories or manifestations.

*As promised in the preceding verse the Lord now first of all describes His divine glories in verses 20 to 39:—*

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः ।

अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ॥ २० ॥

गुडाकेश O Arjuna (*lit.*, a conqueror of sleep); अहम् I; सर्वभूताशयस्थितः seated in the heart of all beings; आत्मा the (universal) self; च even so; भूतानाम् of (all) beings; आदिः the beginning; च and; मध्यम् the middle; च and; अन्तः the end; अहम् एव I alone (am).

Arjuna, I am the universal Self seated in the heart of all beings; so I alone am the beginning and middle and also the end of all beings. (20)

'Guḍākā' means sleep. And a conqueror of sleep is called 'Guḍākeśa'. Addressing Arjuna by this word, the Lord is complimenting him on his attentiveness. The word 'Ātmā', qualified by the compound adjective 'Sarvabhūtāśayasthitah', signifies the conscious spirit or soul residing in the heart of all living beings and referred to elsewhere as the 'Parā Prakṛti' (higher nature) and the 'Kṣetrajña' (Knower of the field)—*vide* VII. 5., XIII. 1. Being a fragment of God (XV. 7), it is in essence the same as God Himself

(XIII, 2). It is therefore that the Lord declares the soul as identical with Him.

The word 'Bhūtānām' stands for all embodied beings both sentient and insentient. The creation, maintenance and destruction of beings proceed from God. All beings emanate from Him, exist in Him, and even at the time of final dissolution get merged in Him. In other words, He is the root cause and substratum of all. This is what is meant by the Lord when He calls Himself the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings.

In Chapter LXX of the *Vāyu-Purāṇa* we read the following account:—"The creation of beings by Kaśyapa having been over, the said Prajāpati selected from the various orders of creation those who excelled their group in merit and glory and for the governance of those groups made them lords over the rest. Thus the moon was made the king of the stars and planets; Bṛhaspati was appointed as the chief of Āngirasas (the sons of Angirā); Śukrāchārya was appointed as the head of the Bhārgavas (the scions of Bhṛgu); Viṣṇu was made the chief of the Ādityas (sons of Aditi); Pāvaka (the god of fire), of the Vasus; Dakṣa, of the Prajāpatis (lords of creation); Prahlāda, of the Daityas; Indra, of the Maruts; Nārāyaṇa, of the Sādhyas; Śankara, of the Rudras; Varuṇa was made the ruler of the waters; Kubera, of the Yakṣas (a class of demigods); Śulapāṇi (Bhairava), of the Bhūtas and Piśāchas; the ocean, of the rivers; Chitraratha, of the Gandharvas (the celestial bards); Utcchāśravas, of the horses; the lion, of the beasts; the bull, of the quadrupeds; Garuḍa, of the birds; Śeṣa, of the snakes and other reptiles; Vāsuki, of the Nāgas; Takṣaka, of other varieties of snakes and Nāgas; the Himālaya range, of the mountains; Viprachitti, of the Dānavas; Vaivasvata, of the manes; Parjanya (the god of rains), of the seas, rivers and clouds; Kāma (the god of Love), of the Apsarās (celestial nymphs); Saṃvatsara (the year), of the various divisions of time such as the seasons and months etc.; Sudhāmā, of the East; Ketumān, of the West and Vaivasvata Manu was made the king of all human beings. The administration and maintenance of the entire creation is being carried on by these functionaries." The description of the glories of God contained in the present chapter agrees in many respects with the above description.

आदित्यानामहं विष्णुर्ज्योतिषां रविरंशुमान् ।

मरीचिर्मरुतामसि नक्षत्राणामहं शशी ॥ २१ ॥

अहम् I ( am ) : आदित्यानाम् among the ( twelve ) sons of Aditi; विष्णुः Viṣṇu; ज्योतिषाम् ( and ) among the luminaries; अंशुमान् रविः the radiant sun; अहम् I : मरुताम् of the Maruts ( wind-gods, forty-nine in number ); मरीचिः the glow; नक्षत्राणाम् ( and ) among stars; शशी ( their lord ) the moon; असि am.

I am Viṣṇu among the twelve sons of Aditi, and the radiant sun among the luminaries; I am the glow of the Maruts\* ( the forty-nine wind-gods ), and the moon among the stars. ( 21 )

The twelve sons of Aditi, viz., Dhātā, Mitra, Aryamā, Indra, Varuṇa, Aṃśa, Bhaga, Viwasvān, Pūṣā, Savitā, Twaṣṭā and Viṣṇu, are known as the twelve Ādityas. Viṣṇu is their lord and the best of them all. It is therefore that the Lord calls Viṣṇu His own self.

Among luminous objects such as the sun, moon, stars, lightning and fire etc., the sun is the most resplendent of all;

hence among all luminaries the Lord has singled out the sun as His own self.

The forty-nine Maruts or wind-gods were born of the spiritual glow of goddess Diti's religious observance in the shape of meditation on God. It was because of that spiritual glow that they could not be slaughtered in their mother's womb.† Hence the Lord speaks of that glow of theirs as His own self.

\* The names of the forty-nine wind-gods are: Sattvajyoti, Āditya, Satyajyoti, Tiryajyoti, Sajyoti, Jyotiṣmān, Harita, Ṛtajit, Satyajit, Suṣeṇa, Senajit, Satyamitra, Abhimitra, Harimitra, Kṛta, Satya, Dhruva, Dhartā, Vidhartā, Vidhārāya, Dhvānta, Dhuni, Ugra, Bhīma, Abhiyu, Śakṣipa, Īḍṛk, Anyāḍṛk, Yāḍṛk, Pratīkṛt, Ṛk, Samiti, Saṃrambha, Īḍṛkṣa, Puruṣa, Anyāḍṛkṣa, Chetasa, Samitā, Samidṛkṣa, Pratidṛkṣa, Maruti, Sarata, Deva, Diśa, Yajuṣ, Anudṛk, Sāma, Mānuṣa and Viś ( vide *Vāyu-Purāṇa* LXVII. 123-130 ). The *Garuḍa Purāṇa* and other Purāṇas give slightly different names. But the name 'Marichi' is not to be found anywhere. It is for this reason that the word 'Marichi' has not been interpreted as the name of a wind-god, but as the glory or rays of all the Maruts.

The sons born of Dakṣa's daughter, Marutvatī, are also called Maruts ( vide *Harivaṃśa* ). The Purāṇas describe their birth in different ways and under different names in the different Manvantaras.

+ धाता मित्रोऽर्यमा शक्रो वरुणस्त्वंश एव च । भगो विवस्वान् पूषा च सविता दशमस्तथा ॥

एकादशस्तथा त्वष्टा द्वादशो विष्णुरुच्यते । जघन्यजस्तु सर्वेषामादित्यानां गुणाधिकः ॥

( *Mahā., Ādi., LXV. 15-16* )

† Having lost many of her sons in the war with gods Diti propitiated her husband, Kaśyapa, by her loving services. Kaśyapa, who was the foremost of all ascetics, pleased her in his turn by granting her a boon. Diti asked of him a most glorious son capable of killing Indra. The great sage Kaśyapa granted her the desired boon, and while conferring that terrible boon told her that if she could bear the foetus in her womb for a hundred years observing strict purity and self-restraint, and keeping her mind constantly fixed on God, she would surely get a son capable of killing Indra." Knowing the foetus in Diti's womb as his deadly enemy, Indra, the chief of celestials, too made his appearance there to serve Diti with

Being the lord of the twenty-seven the chief of all other stars, the moon is asterisms or lunar mansions, such as one of the chief glories of God. Hence the Aświni, Bharanī, Kṛttikā and so on, and Lord speaks of the moon as His own self.

वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि देवानामस्मि वासवः ।

इन्द्रियाणां मनश्चास्मि भूतानामस्मि चेतना ॥ २२ ॥

वेदानाम् among the Vedas; सामवेदः अस्मि I am Sāmaveda; देवानाम् among the gods; वासवः अस्मि I am Indra; इन्द्रियाणाम् of the organs of perception etc.; मनः अस्मि I am the mind; च and; भूतानाम् in living beings; चेतना अस्मि I am the consciousness (life-energy).

Among the Vedas, I am the Sāmaveda; among the gods, I am Indra. Among the organs of perception etc., I am the mind; and I am the consciousness (life-energy) in living beings. (22)

Among the four Vedas,—R̥k, Yajus, Sāma and Atharva,—the Sāmaveda is full of sweetest psalms and the most charming praises of God; hence it occupies the foremost place among the Vedas. It is therefore that the Lord speaks of the Sāmaveda as His own self.

Being the king and ruler of all gods, such as the sun-god, moon-god, the god of fire and the god of air etc., Indra is the foremost of them all. Hence the Lord calls him His own self.

Of the eleven Indriyas or organs of perception etc., viz., the organs of sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell and speech, hands and feet, the organs of generation

and evacuation and the mind, the last-named, viz., the mind, is not only the controller and director of the rest, but the subtlest and best of them all; hence it occupies the foremost place among them. It is therefore that the Lord declares it to be His own self.

The word 'Chetanā' in this verse signifies the principle of consciousness existing in beings, which is a faculty of the mind, whereby they experience pleasure and pain and cognize other objects, and which has been enumerated in XIII. 6 as an evolute of the 'Kṣetra'. It is the main faculty responsible for the various experiences of living beings, hence the Lord speaks of it as His own self.

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great humility. He kept himself by her side all the twenty-four hours waiting for an opportunity to do something whenever he found some lapse in her purity. At last, only a few days before the expiry of a hundred years, it so happened that Diti went to bed, one day, without washing her feet and was soon overtaken by sleep. Availing himself of that opportunity, Indra entered her womb with his weapon, a thunderbolt, in hand, and split the great foetus into seven parts. Smitten by the thunderbolt, the foetus raised a loud cry. Indra tried to hush it up by repeatedly whispering into its ears 'Mā rodiḥ' (don't cry). Finding that, though split into seven parts, the foetus was still alive, Indra got much exasperated and again split each of those seven parts into seven. Even though multiplied forty-nine times, the foetus still remained alive. Indra was now convinced that it would not die. These forty-nine parts became known as the mighty Maruts or wind-gods. They got the collective name of 'Maruts' from Indra's words addressed to them: 'Mā rodiḥ' (don't cry). (see *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*, Part I, Ch. 21.)

रुद्राणां शंकरश्चास्मि वित्तेशो यक्षरक्षसाम् ।

वसूनां पावकश्चास्मि मेरुः शिखरिणामहम् ॥ २३ ॥

रुद्राणाम् of the eleven Rudras ( gods of destruction ); शंकरः Lord Śiva; अस्मि I am; च and; यक्षरक्षसाम् of the Yakṣas and Rākṣasas; वित्तेशः ( I am ) the lord of riches, Kubera; अहम् I; वसूनाम् of the ( eight ) Vasus; पावकः the god of fire; अस्मि I am; च and; शिखरिणाम् among the mountains; मेरुः ( I am ) the mountain Meru.

Among the eleven Rudras ( gods of destruction ), I am Śiva; and among the Yakṣas and Rākṣasas, I am the lord of riches ( Kubera ). Among the eight Vasus, I am the god of fire; and among the mountains, I am the Meru. ( 23 )

The eleven Rudras are: Hara, Bahurūpa, Tryambaka, Aparājita, Vṛṣākapi, Śambhu, Kapardi, Raivata, Mṛgavyādha, Śarva and Kapāli.\* Of these, Śambhu or Śankara is the lord of the rest, and the bestower of blessedness and blessedness itself. Therefore, the Lord declares him to be His very self.

Kubera† is the chief of the Yakṣas and Rākṣasas, and the best among them; he is best known as a regional god or Lokapāla and the lord of riches. Therefore, the Lord said that He was Kubera.

The eight Vasus are: Dhara, Dhruva, Soma, Ahaḥ, Anila, Anala, Pratyūṣa and Prabhāsa.† Anala or the god of fire is the chief among them and carries oblations to the gods. He is also regarded as the mouth of God. It is therefore that the Lord calls the god of fire His very self.

The Meru mountain is believed to be the centre of the stars and the main divisions of the world and the repository of gold and jewels. Its peaks are the highest in the world. Being thus the chief of mountains, the Meru has been declared to be the very self of the Lord

\* हरश्च बहुरूपश्च त्र्यम्बकश्चापराजितः । वृषाकपिश्च शम्भुश्च कपर्दी रैवतस्तथा ॥

मृगव्याधश्च शर्वश्च कपाली च विशाम्पते । एकादशैते कथिता रुद्रास्त्रिभुवनेश्वराः ॥

( Harivaṃśa I. iii. 51-52 )

† Kubera is a grandson of the sage Pulastya and a son of Viśravā. He was born of Devavṛṇinī, a daughter of sage Bharadvāja. Pleased with his long and arduous penance, Brahmā asked him to seek a boon from him. He sought from him the custodianship of the riches of the universe. Brahmā thereupon said, "I am also anxious to appoint someone as the fourth guardian of the universe; therefore, I call upon you to accept this high office as Indra, Yama and Varuṇa have done." It was Brahmā again who made a gift to him of the celebrated aerial car known as Puṣpaka. Since then Kubera has held the office of the god of riches. Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa and others were born of his step-mother, Kaikāsi ( Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa, Uttarakāṇḍa, III ). The celebrated Nalakūbara and Maṇiṛiva, who had been turned into a pair of Arjuna trees by the curse of Nārada and were redeemed by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, were the sons of no other than Kubera. ( Vide Śrīmad Bhāgavata X. 10 ).

‡ धरो ध्रुवश्च सोमश्च अहश्चैवानिलोऽनलः । प्रत्यूषश्च प्रभासश्च वसवोऽष्टौ प्रकीर्तिताः ॥

( Mahā., Ādi., LXVI 18 )

# Kalyana-Kalpataru

The Lord as Destroyer



“Among the eleven Rudras (gods of destruction) I am Śiva.”

( X. 23. )

पुरोधसां च मुख्यं मां विद्धि पार्थ बृहस्पतिम् ।

सेनानीनामहं स्कन्दः सरसामसि सागरः ॥ २४ ॥

पुरोधसाम् among the priests; मुख्यम् (their) chief; बृहस्पतिम् Brhaspati; माम् Me; विद्धि know; पार्थ O son of Prthā, Arjuna; अहम् I; सेनानीनाम् among warrior-chiefs; स्कन्दः am Skanda (the generalissimo of the gods); च and; सरसाम् among the waters; सागरः ocean; असि am.

Among the priests, Arjuna, know Me to be their chief, Brhaspati. Among warrior-chiefs, I am Skanda (the generalissimo of the gods); and among the waters, I am the ocean. (24)

Brhaspati\* is the preceptor of Indra, the chief of the celestials, the family priest of the gods, the greatest repository of learning and wisdom, the foremost of all the priests of the world and the head of the Āngirāsas (sons of Angirā). Therefore, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa calls him His own self.

arms. A son of Lord Śiva†, he is the generalissimo of the gods. He is the foremost of all generals in the world. It is therefore that the Lord declares him to be His very self.

Among all seats of water in the world, the ocean‡ is the largest and is believed to be their lord. Hence the ocean is their chief representative; and it is therefore that the Lord declares it to be His own self.

Skanda is also known by the name of Kārtikeya. He has six heads and twelve

महर्षीणां भृगुरहं गिरामस्येकमक्षरम् ।

यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽसि स्थावराणां हिमालयः ॥ २५ ॥

अहम् I; महर्षीणाम् among the great seers; भृगुः the sage Bhṛgu; गिराम् (and) among words; एकम् अक्षरम् the one syllable OM; असि am; यज्ञानाम् among offerings; जपयज्ञः the offering of Japa; स्थावराणाम् (and) among the immovables; हिमालयः the Himālaya mountain; असि I am.

\* Brhaspati is the most illustrious son of Maharṣi Angirā. He was the chief of the seven seers that held office in the second or Swārochisa Manvantara of the present Kalpa (*Harivamśa* VII. 12; *Matsya-Purāṇa* IX. 8). He is a great scholar. It was he who taught the Vedas with their limbs and other auxiliary branches of learning, the six systems of philosophy, the Smṛti texts and Āgamas etc. to the Lord when he assumed the form of a Dwarf. (*Bṛhaddharma-Purāṇa*, *Madhya*, XVI. 69-73). It was his son, Kacha, who learnt the science of reviving the dead from Śukrāchārya. Brhaspati is the family priest of Indra, the chief of celestials. The sublime teachings that he imparted to Indra from time to time form a most useful study for the humanity. Accounts of these teachings are to be found in the Śānti and Anuśāsana Parvas of the *Mahābhārata*.

† In some books he is held to be born of Dakṣa's daughter Swāhā through Agni, the god of fire (*Mahābhārata*, *Vanaparva*, 223). The *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas* contain wonderful stories about him.

‡ The word 'ocean' in this verse means all the oceans taken together.

Among the great seers, I am Bhṛgu; among words, I am the sacred syllable OM. Among offerings, I am the offering of Japa (muttering of sacred formulas); and among the immovables, the Himālaya. (25)

Maharṣis there are many; their distinctive marks and the names of the ten most prominent of them are given below:—

"The mind-born sons of Brahmā are all independent in the matter of birth and endowed with supernatural powers. That which is not bounded by limits, in other words, that which is infinite in extent, and which, though all-pervasive, is yet visible to us, is called 'Mahat'. And those wise men who having transcended the limits of the human intellect depend entirely on Him who is infinite in virtues ('Mahāntam Ṛṣanti'), are called Maharṣis. Bhṛgu, Marīchi, Atri, Angirā, Pulaha, Kratu, Manu, Dakṣa, Vasiṣṭha and Pulastya—these are the ten principal Maharṣis. They all sprang of their own will from the mind of Brahmā and are possessed of supernatural powers. Because God Himself appeared through Brahmā in the form of these seers, they are called

Maharṣis."\* (Vāyu-Purāṇa LIX. 82-3, 89-90.)

Bhṛgu† is the chief of all great seers. He is a great devotee of God, highly enlightened and full of spiritual glow; hence the Lord declares him to be His own self.

The substantive 'Gir' (the uninflected form of Girām) denotes a word expressive of meaning, and the word OM, also known as the 'Prajāva' is termed as the 'one syllable' (VIII. 13). Of all significant words 'Prajāva' stands the foremost; for it is an appellation of God (XVII. 23). The repetition of this word brings God-Realization and there is identity between word and its meaning. Hence the Lord speaks of the 'Prajāva' as His own self.

Japa or repetition of the Divine Name involves no violence in any form, and the practice of Japa leads to the direct perception of God. The Code of Manu also speaks very highly of Japa.†

\* ईश्वराः स्वयमुद्भूता मानसा ब्रह्मणः सुताः । यस्मान्न हन्यते मानैर्महान् परिगतः पुरः ॥

यस्माद्वृण्ति ये धीरा महान्तं सर्वतो गुणैः । तस्मान्महर्षयः प्रोक्ता बुद्धेः परमदर्शिनः ॥

भृगुर्मरीचिरित्रिश्च अङ्गिराः पुलहः क्रतुः । मनुर्दक्षो वसिष्ठश्च पुलस्त्यश्चेति ते दश ॥

ब्रह्मणो मानसा ह्येत उद्भूताः स्वयमीश्वराः । प्रवर्तत ऋषेर्यस्मान्महान्तस्मान् महर्षयः ॥

† Among the mind-born sons of Brahmā, Bhṛgu is a prominent figure. He has successively held the position of one of the seven seers in the Swāyambhuva, Chākṣuṣa and other Manvantaras. In his line have appeared a number of seers, revealers of Mantras or sacred hymns, and founders of independent Gotras or families. He holds a position of great eminence among the seers. He married Khyāti, a daughter of Dakṣa, who gave birth to two sons, Dhātā and Vidhātā by name, and a daughter named Śrī. This latter became the Consort of Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa. The celebrated sage Chyavana too was begotten by him. His sons Jyotiṣmān, Sukṛti, Haviṣmān, Tapodhṛti, Nirutsuka and Atibāhu have figured as the chief among the seven seers in different Manvantaras. He is one of the greatest seers and revealers of Mantras. It was he who tested the Sattvic character of Śrī Viṣṇu's forbearance by kicking His chest. In commemoration of that incident Bhagavān Viṣṇu still bears on His chest the mark of the kick in the shape of a footprint. Having been entrusted with the work of creation, Bhṛgu, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Angirā, Marīchi, Dakṣa, Atri and Vasiṣṭha are also known as the "Nine Brahmās". Almost all the Purāṇas are replete with references to this sage (vide Harivaṃśa, the Matsya, Śiva, Brahmāṇḍa, Devī-Bhāgavata, Mārkaṇḍeya, Padma, Vāyu and the Bhāgavata Purāṇas and the Mahābhārata).

‡ विधियशाज्जपयज्ञो विशिष्टो दशभिर्गुणैः । उपांशुः स्याच्छतगुणः साहस्रो मानसः स्मृतः ॥



Hence 'Japayajña' excels all other forms of sacrifice; and it is in order to bring out the superiority of 'Japayajña' to every other offering that the Lord calls it His very self.

That which has a fixed position or is immovable is called 'Sthāvara'. Mountains, because they are immovable, fall under the category of 'Sthāvaras'.

The Himālaya is the foremost of them all. It is a most sacred place for the practice of austerities and is helpful in the attainment of liberation. The divine sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa performed their austerities on the Himalayan peaks. On top of this, the Himālaya is the king of mountains. Hence the Lord speaks of it as His very self.

अश्वत्थः सर्ववृक्षाणां देवर्षीणां च नारदः ।

गन्धर्वाणां चित्ररथः सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः ॥ २६ ॥

सर्ववृक्षाणाम् of all trees; अश्वत्थः (I am) the Aśwattha (the holy fig tree); देवर्षीणाम् among the celestial sages; नारदः the sage Nārada; गन्धर्वाणाम् among the Gandharvas (the celestial musicians); चित्ररथः Chitraratha (the king of Gandharvas); च and; सिद्धानाम् among the Siddhas (perfect souls); कपिलः मुनिः (am) the sage Kapila.

Among all trees, I am the Aśwattha (the holy fig tree); among the celestial sages, Nārada; among the Gandharvas (celestial musicians), Chitraratha; and among the Siddhas, I am the sage Kapila. (26)

The holy fig tree\* (*figus religiosa*) is His very self.

held to be the ruler of the kingdom of plants and the most sacred of all trees; hence the Lord declares it to be

For the marks of a Devarṣi or celestial sage the reader is referred to

"Japayajña is ten times more valuable than a ritual; the same, when practised in a low whisper, is a hundred times more valuable; while mental Japa is a thousand times more valuable than the same."

\* The Purāṇas speak in very high terms of the Aśwattha tree. The *Skanda-Purāṇa* says:—

मूले विष्णुः स्थितो नित्यं स्कन्धे केशव एव च ।

नारायणस्तु शाखासु पत्रेषु भगवान् हरिः ॥

फलेऽच्युतो न संदेहः सर्वदेवैः समन्वितः ॥

स एव विष्णुर्द्रुम एव मूर्तो महात्मभिः सेवितपुण्यमूलः ।

यस्याश्रयः पापसहस्रहन्ता भवेन्नृणां कामदुषो गुणाढ्यः ॥

(*Skanda-Purāṇa, Nāgara-Khaṇḍa* 247. 41, 42, 44)

"In the root of the holy fig tree resides Viṣṇu; in the trunk, Keśava; in the branches, Nārāyaṇa; in the leaves, Lord Hari; and in the fruits abides Achyuta in conjunction with all the gods. There is not the least doubt about this. This tree is Viṣṇu Himself appearing in a concrete form; exalted souls worship the sacred root of this tree. Dependence on this tree wipes out thousands of men's sins, grants their prayers and bestows merit."

Besides this, works on Indian medicine also speak highly of this tree; its leaves, fruit and bark—all possess medicinal properties. They are made use of in treating ailments such as impurity of blood, excess of phlegm, wind and bile, a burning sensation all over the body, vomiting, dropsy, want of appetite, poisoning, cough, remittent fever, hiccough, a bruise in the heart, disease of the nose, dry spreading itches, worms, leprosy, a sore on the skin, a burn etc.

the commentary on verses 12 and 13 above, where they have been already discussed. Nārada is the chief of all such Devarṣis. Besides this, he is a great devotee, a highly enlightened soul and an expert revealer of Mantras. Hence it is that the Lord declares him to be His very self. For a detailed account of Nārada too the reader is referred to the footnote below the commentary on verses 12 and 13.

The Gandharvas are a particular class of celestial beings. They are celestial musicians and actors. In the celestial regions they are considered to be most handsome and attractive in appearance. The abode of the Gandharvas or Gandharvaloka is situated above the abode of the Guhyakas and below that of the Vidyādharas. Like the gods and the manes, there are two varieties of Gandharvas—earthly and celestial. A human being ascending to the abode of the Gandharvas by dint of his merits after death is an 'earthly' Gandharva; while he who is a Gandharva from the beginning of a Kalpa is called a 'celestial Gandharva'. The celestial Gandharvas are again divided into two classes—'Mauneyas' and 'Prādheyas'. Two of sage Kaśyapa's wives bore the names of Muni and Pradhā respectively. Most of the Apsarās and Gandharvas took their birth from them. Sixteen celestial Gandharvas, viz., Bhīmasena, Ugrasena, Suparṇa, Varuṇa, Gopati, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Sūryavarchā, Satyavāk, Arkaparṇa, Prayuta, Bhīma, Chitraratha, Śaṁśirā, Parjanya, Kali and Nārada, being the progeny of Muni, are called 'Mauneyas'. Another group of fourteen Gandharvas, viz., Siddha, Pūrṇa, Barhi, Pūrṇāyu, Brahmachārī, Ratiguna, Suparṇa, Viśwāvasu, Suchandra, Bhānu, Atibāhu,

Hāhā, Hūhū and Tumburu, being born of Pradhā, are called 'Prādheyas' (*Mahābhārata, Ādi., LXV*). Among them, Hāhā, Hūhū, Viśwāvasu, Tumburu, Chitraratha and others are more prominent than the rest; and Chitraratha is considered to be the ruler of them all. Chitraratha is highly proficient in celestial music, and a master of this art. It is therefore, that the Lord calls him His very self. Accounts of these Gandharvas are contained in the Agni, Mārkaṇḍeya, Vāyu and Kālikā Purāṇas, the *Mahābhārata, Ādi-Parva* and other scriptures.

A 'Siddha' is one who has attained supernatural powers of all kinds obtaining on the physical and astral planes, and is fully endowed with noble virtues such as righteousness, wisdom, glory and dispassion etc. There are thousands of such Siddhas, Kapila being the foremost of them all. Lord Kapila is a direct manifestation of God. He took his descent from the womb of Devahūti, wife of the great Yogī Kardama, in order to impart divine knowledge to his mother. At the time of his birth the Creator, Brahmā himself, made his appearance in the hermitage of Kardama and said to Devahūti:—

"Held in high esteem by the teachers of Sāṅkhya, this lord of the Siddhas will enhance your glory and will be known throughout the world by the name of 'Kapila.'"\* (*Śrīmad Bhāgavata III. xxiv. 19.*)

Kapila is eternally endowed by nature with virtues like knowledge, glory, righteousness and dispassion etc. There is none among the Siddhas who can even stand comparison with him, much less excel him. It is therefore that the Lord calls sage Kapila His own self.

उच्चैःश्रवसमश्वानां विद्धि माममृतोद्भवम् ।

ऐरावतं गजेन्द्राणां नराणां च नराधिपम् ॥ २७ ॥

\* अयं सिद्धराणाधीशः सांख्याचार्यैः सुसम्मतः । लोके कपिल इत्याख्यां गन्ता ते कीर्तिवर्धनः ॥

अश्वानाम् among horses; अमृतोद्भवम् begotten ( of the churning of the ocean ) along with nectar; उत्तचैःश्रवसम् ( the celestial horse named ) Uṭchaiḥśravā; गजेन्द्राणाम् among mighty elephants; ऐशवतम् ( the celestial elephant called ) Airāvata; च and; नराणाम् among men; नराधिपम् the king; माम् Me; विद्धि know.

Among horses, know Me to be the celestial horse Uṭchaiḥśravā, begotten of the churning of the ocean along with nectar; among mighty elephants, Airāvata ( Indra's elephant ); and among men, the king. ( 27 )

The celestial horse Uṭchaiḥśravā, was got during the churning of the ocean along with nectar. Hence it is counted as one of the fourteen gems of the world and is regarded as the king of horses. It is therefore that the Lord calls Uṭchaiḥśravā His own self.

scriptures urges his subjects to righteous acts, deterring them from sinful pursuits, and protects them; hence he is regarded as superior to other men. Such kings exhibit the divine power more than ordinary man. It is therefore that the Lord calls him His own self.

The leader of a herd of elephants is called 'Gajendra'. Among such Gajendras too the celestial elephant Airāvata, owned by Indra, is the best of all and is regarded as their chief. Like the horse Uṭchaiḥśravā, it was also got during the churning of the ocean. That is why the Lord declares it to be His own self.

The term 'Narādhipa' can also be taken to refer to the Manu presiding over a particular Manvantara, since he is the lord of men of that Manvantara. It is well-known that Prajāpati appointed Vāivaswata Manu as the lord of men of the existing Manvantara.

A king devoted to his duty and adorned with virtues enumerated in the

मनुष्याणामधिपतिं चक्रे वैवस्वतं मनुम् ।

( Vāyu-Purāṇa LXX. 18 )

आयुधानामहं वज्रं धेनूनामसि कामधुक् ।

प्रजनश्चासि कंदर्पः सर्पाणामसि वासुकिः ॥ २८ ॥

अहम् I; आयुधानाम् among weapons; वज्रम् the thunderbolt ( the weapon of Indra ); धेनूनाम् ( while ) among cows; कामधुक् the celestial cow named Kāmadhenu ( the cow of plenty ); असि I am; प्रजनः followed by procreation; कंदर्पः the sexual urge; असि I am; च and; सर्पाणाम् among serpents; वासुकिः Vāsuki ( the king of serpents ); असि am.

Among weapons, I am the thunderbolt; among cows, I am the celestial cow Kāmadhenu ( the cow of plenty ). I am the sexual desire which leads to procreation ( as enjoined by the scriptures ); among serpents, I am Vāsuki. ( 28 )

Among all the weapons of the universe most powerful, because it embodies the the thunderbolt ( Indra's weapon ) is the glory of sage Dadhichi's austerities and

the lustre of God Himself; and it is said to be unfailing in effect (*Śrīmad Bhāgavata* VI. xi. 19-20). Hence the Lord speaks of it as His very self.

The celestial cow Kāmadhenu (the cow of plenty) is the best of all cows. She can satisfy all the desires of gods and men and was got during the churning of the ocean. Hence the Lord declares her to be His own self.

'Kandarpa' is an appellation of the god of sexual love. By adding the qualification 'Prajana' to it, the Lord shows that only that sexual urge which leads to procreation as enjoined by the scriptures is identical with Him. The same idea was expressed in verse 11 of Chapter VII

by adding the qualification - 'Dharmā-viruddhaḥ' (not inconsistent with virtue) to the word 'Kāmaḥ' (sexual desire). The intention is to show that sexual enjoyment indulged in by sensual men for the gratification of the senses is beastly and hardly consistent with virtue; only such enjoyment as is indulged in by men of self-control only for the sake of procreation, and as enjoined by the scriptures, is consistent with virtue and therefore good. Hence it finds a place among the glories of God.

Vāsuki, being the king of serpents and a devotee of God, is regarded as the best of serpents. Hence the Lord declares him to be His own self.

अनन्तश्चास्मि नागानां वरुणो यादसामहम् ।

पितृणामर्यमा चास्मि यमः संयमतामहम् ॥ २९ ॥

अहम् I; नागानाम् among the Nāgas (a special class of serpents); अनन्तः Ananta (the serpent-god); च and; यादसाम् (the lord) of aquatic creatures; वरुणः Varuṇa (the god of water); अस्मि am; पितृणाम् among the manes; अर्यमा Aryamā (the head of the Pitṛs); च and; संयमताम् among rulers; यमः Yama (the god of death); अहम् I; अस्मि am.

Among Nāgas (a special class of serpents), I am the serpent-god Ananta; and I am Varuṇa, the lord of aquatic creatures. Among the manes, I am Aryamā (the head of the Pitṛs); and among rulers, I am Yama (the god of death). (29)

The serpent-god Śeṣa is the king of all Nāgas and is endowed with a thousand heads. Serving as a cosy bed for the Lord and rendering other services to Him, he is constantly engaged in gratifying Him. Besides he is a great devotee

of the Lord, and often manifesting himself along with the Lord he participates in His divine sports. His birth also is attributed to God.\* Hence he is declared to be the Lord's own self.

\* शेषं चाकल्पयद्देवमनन्तं विश्वरूपिणम् । यो धारयति भूतानि धरां चैमां सपर्वताम् ॥

(Mahā., Bhīṣma., LXVII. 13)

"This supreme Deity brought forth the celestial Nāga, Ananta by name, who embodies in himself the whole creation and supports on his head the entire globe including the mountains as well as all living beings."

Varuṇa, being the lord of all aquatic creatures and deities presiding over the waters, the guardian of a quarter of the universe, a celestial being and a devotee of God, is held to be an outstanding personality. Hence the Lord speaks of him as His own self.

There are seven principal manes: \* Kavyavāha, Anala, Soma, Yama, Aryamā, the Agniṣwāttas and the Barhiṣads. Aryamā, being the head of the Pitṛs, is recognized as

the best of them all; therefore, the Lord speaks of him as His own self.

Among all the rulers on earth, as well as in the celestial world, Yama (the god of death) is the greatest. The awards of Yama are all equitable and righteous, salutary as well as expiatory in character. He is an enlightened devotee of God and the guardian of a quarter of the universe. Hence the Lord speaks of him as His own self.†

प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानां कालः कलयतामहम् ।

मृगाणां च मृगेन्द्रोऽहं वैनतेयश्च पक्षिणाम् ॥ ३० ॥

\* कव्यवाहोऽनलः सोमो यमश्चैवार्यमा तथा । अग्निष्वात्ताः बर्हिषदस्त्रयश्चान्त्या ह्यमूर्त्यः ॥

(Śiva., Dharma., LXIII. 2)

In some books we read the following names: Sukāla, Āṅgīrasa, Suswadhā, Somapa, Vairāja, the Agniṣwāttas and the Barhiṣads (*Harivaṇṣa, Pūrva.*, XVIII). The names may have differed in the different Manvantaras.

† In the court of Yama no one is treated with partiality on any score, nor is there any scope for recommendation, bribery or flattery. His laws are inexorable. It is therefore that he is considered the greatest among rulers. Indra (the lord of paradise), Agni (the god of fire), Nirṛti (the goddess of death), Varuṇa (the god of water), Vāyu (the god of air), Kubera (the god of riches), Īśāna (Śiva) and Brahmā—these are the ten regional gods (*vide Brhaddharma-Purāṇa, Uttara.*, 9). They are the guardians of all the quarters of the universe.

It is said that to the virtuous Yama presents a naturally genial aspect; whereas to the sinners he appears in a dark and ghastly form with bloodshot eyes, terrible jaws, a tongue shooting like lightning, and dreadful bristling hair and with the rod of punishment raised in his hand (*Skanda., Kāśi., Pūrvārdha*, VIII. 55, 56).

Yama is possessed of supreme wisdom. It was he who imparted the knowledge of the Self to Nachiketā. The story of Nachiketā appears in the *Kāthopaniṣad*, the *Mahābhārata* (*Anuśāsana-Parva*) and the *Vārāha-Purāṇa*. Over and above this he is a great devotee of God. The glories of God, as well as of the Divine Name, sung by him before his messengers in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* VI. iii, *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* III. vii, and *Skanda-Purāṇa, Kāśi-Khaṇḍa, Pūrvārdha*, Ch. VIII, should be carefully studied by all without fail.

But occasionally there appear on earth men who bring even Yama to his wit's end. The *Skanda-Purāṇa* records the story of a famous emperor, Kīrtimān by name, who was a great devotee of God. Through his lofty teachings all his subjects were inspired with piety and devotion. By virtue of his religious merits, the souls that were already rotting in the abode of Yama gradually began to be redeemed; while those who newly left their mortal coil attained the supreme state. Thus fresh entry into the abode of Yama was completely stopped. The result was that in due course not a single soul was left in his abode. Thereupon Yama lodged a complaint with Brahmā, who in his turn referred him to Bhagavān Viṣṇu. The latter told him that there was no help so long as the pious and devoted Emperor Kīrtimān ruled over the earth. But such a state of affairs could not last for ever. (*Skanda, Viṣṇu., Vai.*, XI. xii. 13)

अहम् I; दैत्यानाम् among the Daityas; प्रह्लादः (the famous devotee) Prahlāda; च and; कलयताम् among reckoners; कालः Time; अस्मि am; च even so; सृगाणाम् among quadrupeds; मृगेन्द्रः the king of beasts, lion; च and; पक्षिणाम् among birds; अहम् I (am); वैनतेयः Garuḍa (son of Vinatā).

Among the Daityas, I am the great devotee Prahlāda; and among reckoners, I am Time. So among quadrupeds, I am the lion; and among birds, Garuḍa. (30)

The progeny of Diti are known as Daityas. Prahlāda has been recognized as the best of the Daityas inasmuch as he is endowed with all good qualities, an extremely pious soul, a faithful, loving and disinterested devotee of God, and the ruler of the Daityas. Hence the Lord speaks of him as His very self.

The word 'Kāla' denotes time with its various divisions, *e. g.*, a moment, an hour, a day, a fortnight, a month, a year and so on. It is the basis of all astronomical calculations. Hence the Lord

declares it to be identical with Himself.

The lion is recognized as the king of all beasts. It is the strongest, the boldest and the bravest of animals and has a most dignified bearing. Hence the Lord counts it among His glories.

Garuḍa, son of Vinatā, is the king of birds. Being the largest and most powerful of all birds, he is regarded as the best of them. Over and above this, he is a great devotee of God and the Lord's own carrier. Hence the Lord declares him to be His own self.

पवनः पवतामस्मि रामः शस्त्रभृतामहम् ।

झषाणां मकरश्चास्मि स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्नवी ॥ ३१ ॥

अहम् I; पवताम् among the purifiers; पवनः the wind; शस्त्रभृताम् (and) among wielders of weapons; रामः Śrī Rāma; अस्मि am; झषाणाम् among fishes; मकरः the shark; अस्मि am; च and; स्रोतसाम् among rivers; जाह्नवी the Ganges; अस्मि am.

Among purifiers, I am the wind; among warriors, I am Śrī Rāma. Among fishes, I am the shark; and among streams, I am the Ganges. (31)

Some commentators have interpreted the word 'Pavatām' to mean those possessed of swift motion, though such an interpretation is not supported by grammar. The wind has been regarded as the best even among those possessing speed, as well as among purifiers. Hence the superiority of the wind is established from both the points of view.

The word 'Rāma' in this verse refers to Bhagavān Śrī Rāmachandra, son of King Daśaratha. By declaring His identity

with Śrī Rāma, the Lord shows that it is He who assumes different forms for carrying on different kinds of sports in different ages. There is no difference between Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa; for it is He who appears in the form of Śrī Rāma.

Among fishes, the shark is the largest and most powerful. It is on account of this distinction that the Lord declares it to be His own self.

The river Ganges or Bhāgirathī, is the best of all rivers. Having its origin

in the water which washed the feet Finding His way into the water-pot of of the Lord, it is held to be most sacred Brahmā in that liquid form, He became in character.\* The Purāṇas and Itihāsas known as the Ganges. Thus being no sing its glory in the highest terms. other than Brahma transformed into a

Besides this, the story goes that on a liquid, the Ganges possesses infinite glory. one occasion Bhagavān Viṣṇu Himself Hence the Lord declares it to be His melted and began to flow like water. own self.†

\* धातुः कमण्डलुजलं तदुत्क्रमस्य पादावनेजनपवित्रतया नरेन्द्र ।  
स्वर्धुन्यभून्नमसि सा पतती निमार्ष्टि लोकत्रयं सगवतो विशदेव कीर्तिः ॥

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata VIII. xxi. 4)

“O king, that water poured from the pot of Brahmā (the Creator), and hallowed by washing the feet of the Lord, turned to be the heavenly counterpart of the holy Ganges (Mandakini). Descending on earth from the heavens, like the spotless fame of the Lord, it continues to sanctify the three worlds to this day.”

न ह्येतत्परमाश्चर्यं स्वर्धुन्या यदिहोदितम् । अनन्तचरणाम्भोजप्रसृताया भवच्छिदः ॥  
संनिवेद्य मनो यस्मिच्छद्भया मुनयोऽमलाः । त्रैगुण्यं दुस्त्यजं हित्वा सद्यो यातास्तदात्मताम् ॥

(Ibid., IX. ix. 14-15)

“By firmly and devoutly fixing their unsullied mind on the lotus-feet of the Lord sages have speedily attained identity with Him, renouncing the world, which is a product of the three Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti, so difficult to renounce. Hence what has been stated above in praise of the holy Ganges, which cuts asunder the bonds of earthly existence, and has proceeded from the same lotus feet of the Lord, is no cause for any great wonder.”

† When the great goddess Satī, daughter of Dakṣa and Mother of the whole universe, dropped her body, and her consort, Bhagavān Śiva, embarked on a career of rigorous penance, the gods began to invoke the goddess, who revealed herself before them. The gods thereupon implored her to seek the hand of Lord Śiva once more. The goddess assured them that she would descend in two forms in the house of Himālaya, the king of mountains, from the womb of Menakā, daughter of Sumeru. Thereupon she first appeared as the Ganges. Offering praises to her, the gods took her to heaven. Assuming an embodied form, she thence repaired to the Kailāsa mountain with Bhagavān Śankara, and at the request of Brahmā established herself in the water-pot of Brahmā in her formless aspect (अन्तर्धानांशभागेन स्थिता ब्रह्मकमण्डलौ). Brahmā carried her in that water-pot to Brahmāloka, his own abode. Thereafter, on one occasion, Bhagavān Śankara paid a friendly visit to Vaiṣṇuṭha (the abode of Bhagavān Viṣṇu), accompanied by goddess Gangā. There, at the request of Viṣṇu, Lord Śiva entertained Him with songs. Whatever tune he sang materialized before them. As Śankara sang the tune technically known by the name of Śrī, the spirit of that tune also materialized. Enchanted by that melody, Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa, who is Rasa (Bliss) personified, turned into a fluid and glided along. Thereupon Brahmā said to himself, “The melody that has emerged from Brahma (the eternal principle of sound) is Brahma Itself, and Bhagavān Śrī Hari, who is Brahma embodied, has also melted on this occasion; let the Ganges, who is identical with Brahma, absorb this liquid Brahma.” Reflecting thus, he brought his water-pot into contact with that flowing form of Nārāyaṇa. As soon as this was done, the whole of that liquid got mixed with the Ganges, and the formless Ganges now assumed the form of water. Brahmā then returned to his abode. Later on, when Bhagavān Viṣṇu, appearing as the Divine Dwarf, covered the entire heaven-world with one of His feet consisting of Sattva, Brahmā washed that foot with the water contained in his water-pot. At the touch of that water, the divine foot got rooted there, and even after the disappearance of the Lord, the foot stayed along with the Ganges in heaven. The same Ganges, which emerged from that foot, was later brought

सर्गाणामादिरन्तश्च मध्यं चैवाहमर्जुन ।

अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानां वादः प्रवदतामहम् ॥ ३२ ॥

अर्जुन O Arjuna; सर्गाणाम् of creations; आदिः the beginning; च and; मध्यम् the middle; च and; अन्तः the end; एव as well; अहम् I ( am ); अहम् I; विद्यानाम् of sciences; अध्यात्मविद्या the science of the soul or metaphysics; प्रवदताम् ( and ) in disputants; वादः the reasoning ( adopted for determining the truth ).

Arjuna, I am the beginning and the middle and the end of all creations. Of sciences, I am the science of the soul, or metaphysics; in disputants, I am the right type of reasoning. ( 32 )

In verse 20 above the Lord declared Himself as the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings; and in the present verse He says that He is the beginning, the middle and the end of all creations. There is no tautology here; for whereas the word 'Bhūtānām' in verse 20 stands for sentient beings alone, the word 'Sargānām' in the present verse stands for the whole creation consisting of sentient and insentient beings and including all the worlds.

'Adhyātmavidyā' or Brahma-vidyā is that branch of knowledge which deals with the Self, throws light on the Self and enables the soul to realize Brahma easily. All other branches of knowledge in the world, known as well as unknown, are inferior to Brahma-vidyā; for they strengthen the bonds of ignorance rather than break them. Through Brahma-vidyā, however, the knot of ignorance is untied for ever and the truth relating to God realized. Hence it is superior to all other branches

of knowledge and that is why the Lord declares it to be His own self.

There are three forms of argumentation known by the names of 'Jalpa', 'Vitaṇḍā' and 'Vāda'. A disputation which is held with a view to establishing one's own viewpoint and for the demolition of the adversary's standpoint irrespective of which is right and which is wrong, is called 'Jalpa'. That which is resorted to only for the demolition of the opponent's standpoint is known as 'Vitaṇḍā'; while reasoning with the pure motive of arriving at the right conclusion is known by the name of 'Vāda'. While 'Jalpa' and 'Vitaṇḍā' give rise to anger, hatred, violence, pride and other evils, 'Vāda' is helpful in ascertaining the truth and attaining one's spiritual goal. So, while 'Jalpa' and 'Vitaṇḍā' are worth giving up, 'Vāda' is worth adopting wherever necessary. It is because of this merit possessed by 'Vāda' that the Lord declares it as one of His glories.

अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि द्वन्द्वः सामासिकस्य च ।

अहमेवाक्षयः कालो धाताहं विश्वतोमुखः ॥ ३३ ॥

अक्षराणाम् among sounds represented by the alphabet; अकारः 'A' ( the sound represented by the first letter of the alphabet ); अस्मि I am; च and;

down to earth by Bhagīratha, after great exertion in the shape of austere penance, for the deliverance of his ancestors. Here too it was Bhagavān Śankara who bore her on his head. This wonderful, beautiful and instructive story dealing with the glory of the Ganges appears in the *Bṛhadādharmapurāṇa*, *Madhya-Khaṇḍa*, Chapters 12 to 28.



सामासिकस्य of the different varieties of compounds in Sanskrit grammar; इन्द्रः (I am) the copulative compound; अहम् I (am); अक्षयः कालः the endless Time or the Devourer of Time itself; विश्वतोमुखः having one's face on all sides; धाता the sustainer (of all); अहम् एव I alone (am).

Among the sounds represented by the various letters, I am 'A' (the sound represented by the first letter of the alphabet); of the different kinds of compounds in grammar, I am the copulative compound. I am verily the endless Time (the devourer of Time, God); I am the sustainer of all, having My face on all sides. (33)

The sound represented by 'A' is the first of all vowels and consonants and it runs through the sounds represented by all other letters. The Śruti also says: "All speech is represented by the sound 'A'."\* For these reasons the sound 'A' is the best of all other sounds. Hence the Lord declares it to be His own self.

The copulative compound is the best of all compounds, inasmuch as all its components carry equal emphasis.† Hence the Lord enumerates it as one of His glories.

The word 'Kāla' occurring in verse 30 denotes Time as understood in terms of its various divisions such as a Kalpa,

Yuga, year, half-year, month, day, hour, minute, second, and so on. It is an evolute of Prakṛti and ceases to exist in what is known as the Mahāpralaya, or Final Dissolution. Therefore, it is not 'unending'. The 'Time' referred to in the present verse, however, is the same as the supreme Brahma or God Himself, who is constant, eternal and everlasting and without beginning or end. Hence the word has been qualified by the adjective 'endless' (Akṣayaḥ). Thus there is a world of difference between the 'Time' referred to in verse 30 and the 'Time' spoken of in the present verse. One is a product of Prakṛti, while the other is wholly beyond Prakṛti.‡

\* अकारो वै सर्वा वाक् ।

(Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, Pūrvārḍha, III. 6.)

† In Sanskrit grammar there are four varieties of compounds, viz., (1) Avyayibhāva, (2) Tatpuruṣa, (3) Bahuvrīhi, and (4) Dvandva. The other two compounds, Karmadhāraya and Dwigu, are covered by the Tatpuruṣa. In the Avyayibhāva compound, emphasis lies on the first word of the compound. For example, in the compound word 'Adhīhari', meaning 'in Hari', the indeclinable 'Adhī' denotes the seventh case-ending; and this is what is sought to be conveyed by this compound. In the Tatpuruṣa compound, however, the emphasis lies on the second word. For example, of the two components of the compound word 'Sītāpati', the emphasis lies on 'Pati' (husband); for the whole expression signifies Śrī Rāma, husband of Sītā. In the compound called 'Bahuvrīhi', the compounded whole signifies an object other than the meaning of the two components. For example, the compound word 'Pītāmbara' refers to 'the person wearing a yellow garment. Neither of the two components constituting this word, viz., 'Pīta' (yellow) and 'Ambara' (garment) carry emphasis individually; both of them taken together point to a third object, viz., the Lord who wears a yellow robe. In the form of compound known as Dvandva (the copulative compound), however, all the components carry equal emphasis. For example, the compound word 'Rāmalakṣmaṇau' refers to Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa both. Hence both the components forming this compound carry equal emphasis.

‡ There are three varieties of Kāla:—

(1) 'Kāla' in the sense of Time.

Speaking of Himself as "the sustainer of all, having His face on all sides", the Lord brings out His identity with the Cosmic Form of God. The intention is to show that the all-formed and all-pervading God, the sustainer and nourisher of all, is the same as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and no other.

मृत्युः सर्वहरश्चाहमुद्भवश्च भविष्यताम् ।

कीर्तिः श्रीर्वाक् च नारीणां स्मृतिर्मेधा धृतिः क्षमा ॥ ३४ ॥

अहम् I am; सर्वहरः that snatches all; मृत्युः the Death; च and; भविष्यताम् of all that shall be; उद्भवः (I am) the origin; च even so; नारीणाम् among women; कीर्तिः glory; श्रीः prosperity; वाक् speech; स्मृतिः memory; मेधाः intelligence; धृतिः steadfastness; च and; क्षमा forbearance.

I am the all-destroying Death that snatches all, and the origin of all that shall be born. Among women, I am Kīrti, Śrī, Vāk, Smṛti, Medhā, Dhṛti and Kṣamā (the goddesses presiding over glory, prosperity, speech, memory, intelligence, steadfastness and forbearance respectively). (34)

It is God Himself who appears as Death to destroy all. That is why He speaks of Death as His very self in the present verse. He has already stated in verse IX. 19 that He is Death and Immortality both.

Even as God appearing as Death destroys all living beings, i. e., disunites them from their body, so does He unite them with other bodies and thus causes their birth. This is what is meant when the Lord declares Himself to be the origin of all that are to be born.

Prasūti, daughter of Swāyambhuva Manu, was married with Dakṣa Prajāpati and gave birth to twenty-four daughters.

Kīrti, Medhā, Dhṛti, Smṛti and Kṣamā are included in them. Of these, Kīrti, Medhā and Dhṛti were given in marriage to Dharma; Smṛti was married to Angirā, and Kṣamā to sage Pulaha. Śrī is a daughter of Bhṛgu, born of Dakṣa's daughter 'Khyāti'; her hand was espoused by Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa. And 'Vāk' is an offspring of Brahmā. All these seven are deities presiding over the seven virtues indicated by their names, viz., glory, prosperity, speech, memory, intelligence, steadfastness and forbearance, and are recognized as the best among women. It is therefore that the Lord speaks of them as His glories.

(2) 'Kāla' in the form of Prakṛti. The period immediately following the Mahāpralaya, or Final Dissolution, during which Prakṛti exists in a state of equilibrium, is Time in the form of Prakṛti.

(3) The eternal and everlasting God Himself, the embodiment of Knowledge and Bliss.

Higher and subtler than 'Kāla' in the gross form of Time is 'Kāla' in the form of Prakṛti, which is incomprehensible to the intellect; whereas 'Kāla' in the shape of God is even subtler and higher than, and far superior to, Kāla in the form of Prakṛti. Really speaking, God is wholly beyond time and space; but where we speak of Prakṛti and its evolute, the world of matter, God alone, who is all Knowledge and all Bliss, and who is the source, substratum and inspirer of all, is the real 'Kāla'. It is He who is referred to here as the 'endless Time'.

बृहत्साम तथा साम्नां गायत्री छन्दसामहम् ।

मासानां मार्गशीर्षोऽहमृतूनां कुसुमाकरः ॥ ३५ ॥

tथा likewise; साम्नाम् among all the Śrutis that can be sung; अहम् I (am); बृहत्साम the class of Śrutis known as Br̥hatsāma; छन्दसाम् (while) among the Vedic hymns; गायत्री (I am) the metre known as Gāyatrī; मासानाम् among the twelve months (of the Hindu calendar); मार्गशीर्षः (I am) the month known as Mārgaśīrṣa (corresponding approximately to November); ऋतूनाम् (and) among the six seasons (successively appearing in India in course of a year); कुसुमाकरः the vernal season (*lit.*, the season of flowers); अहम् (I am).

Likewise among the Śrutis that can be sung, I am the variety known as Br̥hatsāma; while among the Vedic hymns, I am the hymn known as Gāyatrī. Again, among the twelve months of the Hindu calendar, I am the month known as 'Mārgaśīrṣa' (corresponding approximately to November); (and) among the six seasons (successively appearing in India in course of a year) I am the vernal season. (35)

Among the different varieties (Rathan-tara etc.) of hymns appearing in the Sāmaveda, the variety known as Br̥hatsāma\* is the most prominent and therefore the best. Hence the Lord speaks of it as His very self.

body of sacred literature consisting of the Vedas, Smṛti-texts, Itihāsas and Purāṇas.† It is due to this excellence of the Gāyatrī that the Lord speaks of it as His very self.

The Gāyatrī is the most important of all the hymns or metrical compositions comprised in the Vedas. The glory of the Gāyatrī is scattered through the entire

In the days of the *Mahābhārata*, the year used to begin with the month of Mārgaśīrṣa (*Mahā., Anu., Ch. 106 and 109*). Hence it is the first of the twelve months. Besides, the scriptures promise great rewards to those who observe

\* Br̥hatsāma is a special variety of psalms finding place in the Sāmaveda and devoted to the praises of God under the name of Indra. These psalms are sung towards the end of the sacrifice known by the name of Atirātra.

† The following extracts from the scriptures will throw light on the glory of the Gāyatrī:—

गायत्री छन्दसां मातेति ।

(*Nārāyaṇopaniṣad*, 34)

"Gāyatrī is the mother of all the Vedas."

सर्ववेदसारभूता गायत्र्यास्तु समर्चना । ब्रह्मादयोऽपि सन्ध्यायां तां ध्यायन्ति जपन्ति च ॥

(*Devī-Bhāgavata* XI. xvi. 15)

"Worship of the Gāyatrī constitutes the essence of all the Vedas. Even gods like Brahmā meditate on and repeat the Gāyatrī every morning and evening."

गायत्र्युपासना नित्या सर्ववेदैः समीरिता । यथा विना त्वधःपातो ब्राह्मणस्यास्ति सर्वथा ॥

(*Ibid.*, XII. viii. 89)

sacred vows and fasts\* in this month. The offering of the newly harvested crop to the sacred fire has been recommended in this very month. The *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmiki speaks of this month as the ornament of the year. Thus the month of Mārgaśīrṣa is superior to all months of the year in many respects. Hence the Lord declares it to be His very self.

The spring is the best of all seasons and has been recognized as their queen. During this season the whole plant kingdom wears a sprightly appearance and is clothed in fresh leaves and flowers even without water. The weather in this season is neither too hot nor too cold, and almost all creatures feel cheerful and happy. That is why the Lord declares it to be His own self.

द्यूतं छलयतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ।  
जयोऽस्मि व्यवसायोऽस्मि सत्त्वं सत्त्ववतामहम् ॥ ३६ ॥

अहम् I; छलयताम् among all deceitful practices; द्यूतम् gambling; तेजस्विनाम् ( and ) of the glorious; तेजः glory; अस्मि am; अहम् I; जयः the victory ( of the victorious ); अस्मि am; व्यवसायः the resolve ( of the resolute ); सत्त्ववताम् ( and ) of the good; सत्त्वम् goodness; अस्मि am.

I am gambling among deceitful practices, and the glory of the glorious. I am the victory of the victorious, the resolve of the resolute, the goodness of the good. ( 36 )

"All the Vedas declare worship of the Gāyatri as an obligatory duty ( for those invested with the sacred thread ). Neglect of this brings about the downfall of the Brahman in every way."

अमीष्टं लोकमाप्नोति प्राप्नुयाद् काममीप्सितम् । गायत्री वेदजननी गायत्री पापनाशिनी ॥  
गायत्र्याः परमं नास्ति दिवि चेह च पावनम् । हस्तत्राणप्रदा देवी पततां नरकार्षे ॥

( *Saṅkhasmṛti*, XII. 24-25 )

"A member of the twice-born classes performing the worship of the Gāyatri attains the world of his seeking and the enjoyments craved for by him. Gāyatri is the mother of all the Vedas and the destroyer of all sins. There is nothing more purifying than the Gāyatri either in heaven or on earth. Goddess Gāyatri rescues those who are going to fall into the ocean of hell by holding out her hand to them."

गायत्र्यास्तु परं नास्ति शोधनं पापकर्मणाम् । महाव्याहृतिसंयुक्तां प्रणवेन च संजपेत् ॥

( *Saṃvartasmṛti*, 218 )

"Nothing is more efficacious than the Gāyatri in expiating one's sins. One should repeat the sacred Gāyatri-Mantra along with Prapava ( the syllable OM ) and the three mystic words ( Vyāhṛtis )."

नास्ति गङ्गासमं तीर्थं न देवः केशवाद् परः । गायत्र्यास्तु परं जप्यं न भूतं न भविष्यति ॥

( *Bṛh.*, *Yogi-Yājñavalkya* X. 10 )

"There is no holy place equal in sanctity to the Ganges, and no deity superior to Bhagavān Viṣṇu. And there has neither been, nor will there be, any mystic formula greater than the Gāyatri."

\* शुद्धे मार्गशिरे पक्षे योषिद्धर्तुरनुज्ञया । आरभेत व्रतमिदं सार्वकामिकमादितः ॥

( *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* VI. xix. 12 )

"In the bright fortnight of the Mārgaśīrṣa, for the first time, a woman should undertake, with the permission of her husband, this sacred vow of 'Pūṣsavana', which fulfils all desires."

God is present in all living beings and objects, good, bad or indifferent, existing in this world. It is His presence and inspiration that lend activity to the whole creation. There is hardly any substance which is devoid of the presence or power of God. Of all such beings and objects exhibiting the Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic qualities, only that being or object which is possessed of some extraordinary virtue, exceptional glory and special attraction exhibits the presence and power of God in a special degree. It is from this point of view that the Lord has briefly mentioned in this connection even abstract ideas and virtues like victory, resolution, glory, righteousness and knowledge along with sentient beings like gods, demons, men, beasts, birds and serpents etc. and inanimate objects like the thunderbolt, senses, mind and ocean. It is for brevity's sake that the Lord has mentioned only the main categories or groups. The intention is to show that whatever being, object, action or concept may be thought of, He alone should be contemplated in that form. It is from this point of view, and not with the object of extolling gambling and encouraging people to practise it, that of all deceitful practices the Lord declares it to be His own self.

In this connection it should be remembered that the Lord speaks of the most ferocious and bloodthirsty lion and shark as well as the all-consuming fire and all-devouring Death as His very self. This does not mean that anybody should take into his head to play with a lion or a shark, jump into fire or deliberately enter the jaws of death. The objection that lies in adopting these courses of action holds good in the case of gambling as well.

Glory, victory, resolution and goodness—all these virtues and achievements are helpful in God-Realization; hence the Lord declares them as His own self. This declaration is further intended to show that the glory of the glorious really belongs to Him. He who prides himself on it as a manifestation of his own power commits a blunder. Even so all such virtues and achievements as the victory of the victorious, the resolution of the resolute and the goodness of the good are also His. Priding oneself on these also constitutes the height of folly.\* Besides the above idea the statement also indicates that those who are blessed with these virtues should be regarded as noble inasmuch as the divine glory is manifested in them in a special degree.

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\* There is a story in the *Kenopaniṣad* which runs as under. Once upon a time the gods of heaven scored a victory over the demons through the grace of God. The fame and glory of the gods filled all quarters. Intoxicated by their triumph, the gods turned their face from God and said to each other: "The victory is, indeed, ours. We have vanquished the demons by dint of our own valour and shrewdness. It is for this reason that the world worships us and sings songs commemorating our victory." In order to do a good turn to the gods by humbling their pride the Supreme Being or Brahma sportively manifested such a wonderful form, the very sight of which puzzled the mind of the gods. In order to discover the identity of that wonderful Being in the form of a Yakṣa or demigod, the gods approached their leader, the god of fire, and said to him, "O god of fire, you are the most glorious of all of us. Please go and ascertain who this Yakṣa really is." The god of fire gave his assent and assured them of the success of his mission. He then approached the Yakṣa, but was so overpowered by his brilliance that he had no courage even to speak. At last the divine Yakṣa accosted the god of fire and asked him who he was. The god of fire replied, "My name is widely known. They call me both by the name of Agni and Jātavedā." "This is all right," rejoined the Supreme Being, "but O god of fire, tell Me what prowess you possess and what you are capable of." "O Yakṣa!" the god of fire retorted, "I can reduce to ashes whatever exists on earth or in the intermediate region, animate or inanimate."

वृष्णीनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि पाण्डवानां धनंजयः ।

मुनीनामप्यहं व्यासः कवीनामुशना कविः ॥ ३७ ॥

वृष्णीनाम् among the members of the Vṛṣṇi clan of Kṣatriyas; वासुदेवः Śrī Kṛṣṇa ( son of Vasudeva ); पाण्डवानाम् of the sons of Pāṇḍu ( viz. Yudhiṣṭhira and others ); धनंजयः Arjuna ( *lit.*, a conqueror of riches ); मुनीनाम् among the sages; व्यासः the great sage Vedavyāsa; कवीनाम् among the wise; उशना कविः the wise Śukrāchārya ( the famous preceptor of the demon kings ); अपि too; अहम् I; अस्मि am.

I am Kṛṣṇa among the Vṛṣṇis, Arjuna among the sons of Pāṇḍu, Vyāsa among the sages, and the sage Śukrāchārya among the wise. (37)

Throwing a dry blade of grass before the god of fire, the Supreme Being asked him to burn it. The god of fire exerted all his strength, and tried every means to burn it, but failed to do so. Hanging down his head in shame and without saying a word more to the Yakṣa, he returned to the gods with a sense of frustration writ large on his face and reported that he had failed to discover the identity of the Yakṣa.

Now it was the turn of the wind-god to approach the Yakṣa; but he too had the same experience as the god of fire and could not utter a single word. On the Yakṣa enquiring who he was, the wind-god replied, "I am wind personified; my name and virtues are widely known. I constantly blow and carry smell from one place to another. As I move in the intermediate region, I am also called by the name of Mātariśwā". The Supreme Being asked him what he was capable of. The wind-god replied that he could blow away all that existed on earth or in the intermediate region. Throwing the same dry blade of grass before him, the Supreme Being asked him to blow it away. Exerting all his strength, the wind-god failed even to move the blade of grass. Feeling much ashamed at this, he returned forthwith to the gods and reported that he had failed to make out who the Yakṣa was.

Indra, the Lord of paradise, was the next to approach the Yakṣa. Finding him full of pride and egotism, Brahma in the form of the Yakṣa disappeared from the scene. In order to crush Indra's pride, He did not even condescend to speak to him. Though much abashed at this initial rebuff, Indra did not lose heart and started meditation on God. Presently he noticed in the sky goddess Umā, daughter of Himavān ( the deity presiding over the Himālayas ) standing before him in all her splendour and adorned with the best of ornaments of all kinds. Indra was delighted to see goddess Pārvati and thought that since she constantly lived with Bhagavān Śiva, the embodiment of Knowledge, she must be aware who the Yakṣa was. Therefore, approaching her with great humility, he asked her to disclose the identity of the Yakṣa who having revealed himself before him had forthwith disappeared. Umā replied, "The Yakṣa was no other than Brahma. It was Brahma who vanquished the demons. You were merely His instruments. Your glory increased because of this victory of Brahma. It was His victory that had enhanced your glory and made you objects of worship. It is your vanity that makes you feel triumphant and glorified. Give up this false pride and know that whatever happens is attributable to Him."

This revelation made by Umā opened the eyes of Indra and humbled his pride. Awakened to a sense of the power of Brahma, Indra returned to his abode in heaven and imparted the knowledge of Brahma to the gods of fire and wind as well. Thus these two gods also came to know Brahma. It was this knowledge of Brahma which gave these three gods precedence over all other gods. Of these three, again, Indra occupies the highest place, because he was the first to know Brahma.

By calling Vāsudeva His own self, the Lord establishes identity between a manifestation of God and God himself. The intention is to show that it is the integral Brahma or the Supreme Person, the unborn, immortal and almighty Overlord of all created beings, who manifested Himself as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, son of Vāsudeva (IV. 6). Therefore, he who regards the Lord as an ordinary human being commits an egregious blunder.

Even though Yudhiṣṭhira was the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas, a highly virtuous soul and a great devotee of God, yet it is Arjuna who is recognized as the greatest of the Pāṇḍavas. The reason for this is that when the Lord appeared as the sage Nārāyaṇa, Arjuna was present with Him in the form of Nara. Over and above this, he was the dearest friend and a

great lover of the Lord. That is why the Lord declares him to be His very self.\*

A 'Muni' is one who meditates on God and makes a deep study of the Vedas and other scriptures. Bhagavān Vedavyāsa divided the Vedas after thoroughly examining them, and is the author of the *Mahābhārata*, the various Purāṇas and many other scriptures. He is a part manifestation of God, and a repository of all noble virtues. Being thus the foremost of all sages, Vyāsa has been declared by the Lord as the same as Himself.

The word 'Kaviḥ' stands for a learned and wise man. The great Śukrāchārya is the lord of the Bhārgavas (sons of Bhṛgu), an adept in all branches of learning, and in the science of reviving the dead, and the foremost of the wise. Hence he has been declared to be the very self of the Lord.†

दण्डो दमयतामस्मि नीतिरस्मि जिगीषताम् ।

मौनं चैवासि गुह्यानां ज्ञानं ज्ञानवतामहम् ॥ ३८ ॥

अहम् I ; दमयताम् in rulers ; दण्डः the ruling power ; अस्मि am ; जिगीषताम् in those who seek to conquer ; नीतिः righteousness ; अस्मि am ; गुह्यानाम् (the custodian) of secrets ;

\* The Lord Himself says in the *Mahābhārata*:—

नरस्त्वमसि दुर्द्धर्षं हरिर्नारायणो ह्यहम् । काले लोकमिमं प्राप्तौ नरनारायणावृषी ॥  
अनन्यः पार्थ मत्तत्त्वं त्वत्तश्चाहं तथैव च । नावयोरन्तरं शक्यं वेदितुं भरतर्षभ ॥

( *Mahā., Vana., XII. 46-47* )

"O unconquerable Arjuna ! you are the divine Nara and I am God Nārāyaṇa Himself. At one time both of us came down to earth in the form of the sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa. Therefore, O Arjuna, you are none other than Myself, and I am no other than you. O best of the Bharatas ! no one can discriminate between you and Me."

† Among the seven sons, Chyavana and others, of the great sage Bhṛgu, Śukra is the principal figure. Through the worship of God Śankara, he obtained knowledge of the science of reviving the dead and a body free from death and old age and as strong as adamant. It was through the grace of God Śankara, again, that he acquired proficiency in the science of Yoga and attained the position of a teacher of Yoga. He is the family priest of the demons. His other names are Kāvya, Kavi and Uśanā. He married the mind-born daughter of the manes, known by the name of Go. Śaṇḍa and Amarka, the celebrated teachers of Prahlāda, were the sons of Śukra. A master of many secret and rare Mantras, proficient in many sciences and exceptionally wise, Śukra is a great adept in politics. His monumental work on political science, known by the name of 'Śukraniti' is widely known. It was from him that Kacha, the son of Bṛhaspati, learnt the science of revival of the dead. Many wonderful and instructive stories connected with Śukra appear in the *Mahābhārata*, as well as in the Bhāgavata, Vāyu, Brahma, Matsya and Skanda Purāṇas and other works.

मौनम् reticence; अस्मि am; च and; ज्ञानवताम् of the wise; ज्ञानम् the wisdom; एव too ( am I ).

I am the subduing power in rulers; I am righteousness in those who seek to conquer. Of things to be kept secret, I am the custodian in the shape of reticence; and I am the wisdom of the wise. ( 38 )

Deterring the unrighteous and unruly element from sinful conduct, the fear of punishment urges them to right action. It is through self-restraint that the mind and senses of man are controlled and help him in God-Realization. It is through fear of punishment that all living beings perform their respective functions. Hence the authority possessed by gods, kings and rulers who rule according to law has been declared by the Lord to be the same as Himself.

The word 'Niti', in this verse, stands for righteousness. It is righteousness alone which brings one true victory. A Government which abandons righteousness, and follows the path of unrighteousness, is doomed. Therefore, righteousness is the

best means for the attainment of victory. Hence the Lord declares righteousness to be the same as Himself.

Secrets can be maintained only through reticence. Without restraint over speech, it is exceptionally difficult to preserve a secret. Reticence being thus the best custodian of secrets, the Lord speaks of it as His own self.

The word 'Jñānavatām' stands for those truly wise men who have realized the supreme Brahma or God. Their knowledge alone is the best of all knowledge. Hence the Lord declares such knowledge to be His own self. In verse 17 of Chapter XIII too the Lord likewise declares Himself to be the same as Knowledge.

यच्चापि सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन ।

न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान्मया भूतं चराचरम् ॥ ३९ ॥

च and; अर्जुन O Arjuna; यत् which; सर्वभूतानाम् of all beings; बीजम् ( is ) the seed; तत् अपि that too; अहम् I ( am ); तत् such; चराचरम् भूतम् any being, moving or inert; न अस्ति there is not; यत् which; मया विना without Me; स्यात् may exist.

Arjuna, I am even that which is the seed of all life. For there is no creature, moving or inert, which exists without Me. ( 39 )

God alone is the ultimate support and substratum of the whole of this animate and inanimate creation; it is from Him that everything originates. Hence He alone is the seed or ultimate cause of all. It is for this reason that in VII. 10 He has been declared as the 'eternal seed' of all beings, and in IX. 18 as the 'imperishable seed'. Hence, in the present verse, He proclaims His identity with the seed of all beings.

Lord reveals His omnipresence and His identity with all. That is to say, all creatures, animate or inanimate, are pervaded by Him, and there is no creature whatsoever which is devoid of His presence. Therefore, regarding all beings as identical with God, and knowing them as pervaded by Him, one should think of God alone in the form of whatever presents itself before his mind. This concludes the reply to Arjuna's question contained in X. 17, viz., in what particular forms He should be meditated upon by him.

By the latter half of this verse the



*In verse 19 the Lord stated that there was no end to His divine glories, and therefore undertook to enumerate only His conspicuous glories. Accordingly, from verse 20 to 39, He described those glories. Now He winds up the topic revealing once more the infinite variety of His divine glories.*

नान्तोऽस्ति मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां परंतप ।

एष तूद्देशतः प्रोक्तो विभूतेर्विस्तरो मया ॥ ४० ॥

परंतप O vanquisher of foes, Arjuna; मम My; दिव्यानाम् विभूतीनाम् to divine manifestations; अन्तः limit; न अस्ति there is not; मया by Me; विभूतेः of ( My ) glory; एषः this; विस्तरः extent; तु however; उद्देशतः in brief; प्रोक्तः has been described.

Arjuna, there is no limit to My divine manifestations. This is only a brief description by Me of the extent of My glory. ( 40 )

By the first half of this verse the Lord indicates that even His divine glories are unlimited, much more His ordinary glories. Even as the particles of water and earth cannot be counted, so it is impossible to count His glories. They are so numerous that they can neither be known nor described by anyone. His glories are endless in the countless uni-

verses, and none can ever expect to find their limit.

By the second half of the verse the Lord intends to convey that the extent of His divine glories described in this chapter represents only a small fraction of them and that their full description is very difficult. Hence He concludes the discussion of those glories.

*In verse 18 Arjuna requested the Lord to describe His glories and His power of Yoga. Having described them accordingly, He now briefly describes His power of Yoga.*

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।

तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽशसंभवम् ॥ ४१ ॥

यत् यत् whatever; एव indeed; विभूतिमत् glorious; श्रीमत् brilliant; वा and; ऊर्जितम् powerful; सत्त्वं being; तत् तत् एव that very; त्वम् you; मम तेजोऽशसंभवम् a part manifestation of My effulgence; अवगच्छ know.

Every such being as is glorious, brilliant and powerful, know that to be a part manifestation of My glory. ( 41 )

The word 'Sattvam', qualified by the adjectives 'Vibhūtimat', 'Śrīmat' and 'Ūrjitam' covers all living beings or inanimate objects that are possessed of virtues like glory, elegance and comeliness etc., and endowed with strength, energy,

valour or any other power. And regarding every living being or object endowed with all or even one of these qualities as a fraction of the divine glory is what is meant by knowing it as a part manifestation of the divine effulgence,

The electric current gives us light, is all due to the electrical power; in turns our fans, draws water for us and fact, it is a manifestation of a fraction works our radio machine and performs of the electric current. Even so, whatever many other functions at various places. speciality we observe in a particular living It is, however, a settled fact that wher- being or object should be regarded as a ever any such activity takes place, it part manifestation of the divine glory.

*Having thus referred to the manifestation of a fraction of His glory or Yogic power in all principal objects and beings, the Lord now reveals that He holds the entire universe by a mere fraction of His Yogic power.*

अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवाजुन ।

विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥ ४२ ॥

अथवा or; अजुन O Arjuna; एतेन बहुना ज्ञातेन by knowing all this in detail; तव किम् what will you gain; अहम् I; इदम् this; कृत्स्नम् entire; जगत् universe; एकांशेन by a fraction (of My Yogic power); विष्टभ्य holding; स्थितः stand.

Or, what will you gain by knowing all this in detail, Arjuna? Suffice it to say that I stand holding this entire universe by a fraction of My Yogic power. (42)

The indeclinable 'Athavā' introduces an alternative suggestion or something different from what has been stated above. It is intended to convey that the Lord is now going to say something different from, and more remarkable than, what has already been confided to him, viz. a description of His outstanding glories as contained in verses 20 to 39 and of the various media of His manifestation enumerated in verse 41.

Although at the request of Arjuna the Lord described His conspicuous glories in the foregoing verses, it is not all that he should know. The most important thing is that which He is now going to reveal, and which Arjuna is now called

upon to grasp thoroughly. Everything else will then be automatically clear to him, and nothing more will remain still to be known by him.

The word 'Jagat', qualified by the adjectives 'Idam' and 'Kṛtsnam', stands for the entire universe consisting of the different worlds and all animate and inanimate beings inhabiting them with their mind, senses and body, objects and places of enjoyment etc. That the Lord holds countless such universes in a fragment of His being through His own Yogic power is what is sought to be conveyed by the latter half of this verse.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां

योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे विमृत्तियोगो

नाम दशमोऽध्यायः ॥ १० ॥

*Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the tenth chapter entitled "The Yoga of Divine Glories".*





## Chapter XI

At the request of Arjuna, the Lord reveals to him His Cosmic Body in this chapter. A major part of the chapter is solely devoted to a description of the Cosmic Body and praises offered by Arjuna to the Lord manifested in that form; hence it has been given the title of "The Yoga of the Vision of the Cosmic Body."

Title of  
the  
Chapter

Verses 1 to 4 of this chapter contain tributes of praise to the Lord and His teaching, and Arjuna's prayer for a vision of His Cosmic Body. From the fifth to the eighth He calls upon Arjuna to behold in His body the whole universe consisting of gods, men, beasts, birds and all other animate and inanimate beings with many wonderful sights never seen before, and finally offers to vouchsafe the divine eye to him. Reporting the revelation by the Lord of His Cosmic Body to Arjuna in the ninth, Sañjaya describes from the tenth to the thirteenth the form as seen by Arjuna. The fourteenth describes how Arjuna bowed to the Lord with reverence, full of wonder and joy at the sight of that form. From the fifteenth to the thirty-first, Arjuna offers praises to the Cosmic Body and describes what he beheld in that form, and finally requests the Lord to reveal His identity to him. From the thirty-second to the thirty-fourth the Lord declares Himself as Kāla, the destroyer of the worlds, and Bhīṣma, Droṇa and all other brave warriors as already killed by Him, and finally encourages and enjoins Arjuna to fight. Thereafter, verses 35 to 46 describe how Arjuna, wonder-struck and terrified at the words of the Lord, offers his praises and obeisance to Him and begging His forgiveness prays Him to reveal His four-armed divine form. Revealing the glory and rarity of His Cosmic Body in the forty-seventh and forty-eighth, the Lord consoles Arjuna in the forty-ninth and directs him to behold the four-armed divine form. In the fiftieth, Sañjaya describes how the Lord first revealed the four-armed form, and then resumed the human semblance. In the fifty-first, Arjuna tells the Lord how he was composed and returned to his normal state at the sight of the Lord's delightful human form. Thereafter, pointing out in the fifty-second and fifty-third the rarity of the vision of His Cosmic Body, the Lord declares in the fifty-fourth that the same can be easily seen, known and entered into through single-minded devotion. The chapter is concluded after revealing in the fifty-fifth the true nature and reward of exclusive devotion.

Summary of  
the  
Chapter

evil deeds in the shape of joys and (Time) and all regional gods, He is the sorrows, He is free from the faults of almighty Ruler of all. This is the immortal cruelty and discrimination; and manifested glory of the Lord referred to in the in the forms of Prakṛti (Matter), Kāla latter half of the verse.

एवमेतद्यथाऽऽत्थ त्वमात्मानं परमेश्वर ।

द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ते रूपमेश्वरं पुरुषोत्तम ॥ ३ ॥

परमेश्वर O supreme Lord; त्वम् You; आत्मानम् Yourself; यथा what; आत्थ declare to be; एतत् this (is); एवम् so; पुरुषोत्तम O Supreme Person; ते Your; ऐश्वरम् divine (i. e., possessed of wisdom, glory, energy, strength, valour and effulgence); रूपम् form; द्रष्टुम् to perceive (with my own eyes); इच्छामि I long.

Lord, You are precisely what You declare Yourself to be. But I long to see Your divine form (possessed of wisdom, glory, energy, strength, valour and effulgence), O best of persons! (3)

By addressing the Lord as 'Paramesvara' Arjuna seeks to convey that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was the supreme Lord of the entire creation, and thus capable of doing everything. He could, therefore, easily reveal to Arjuna the divine form which he longed to see. Again, by addressing Him as 'Puruṣottama' he shows that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme Person, beyond both the perishable and the imperishable. Arjuna, accordingly hoped that He would condescend to fulfil his desire for a vision of the divine form.

Whatever has been spoken by the Lord about Himself in the course of the description of His virtues, glory, reality and divine powers is wholly true; Arjuna had not the least doubt about it. This is what he means by the first half of this verse.

The word 'Rūpam', qualified by the adjective 'Aśwaram', stands for that divine form of the Lord which exhibits, in a pronounced form, all divine virtues and powers such as unbounded and undying knowledge, energy, strength, valour and effulgence etc., and a fraction of which holds the entire universe. Arjuna's longing to see that form showed that he had never seen it before. Hearing of it from the Lord (X. 42) he had developed

an irresistible yearning to see that form, and he now felt and believed that the object of his existence would be easily accomplished by a vision of that form.

It may be contended here that Arjuna's longing to see that form betrays lack of faith on his part in the words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; for if he had implicit faith in His words and entertained not the least doubt about it, why should he need an ocular proof? We shall, however, presently see that the objection is wholly untenable. Suppose a man who always spoke the truth and possessed a philosopher's stone or any other wonderful object confided the secret to a friend, and the latter was fully convinced of the presence of that wonderful object with the former. If, however, this report excites his curiosity and stimulates in him the desire to see it with his own eyes simply because he had not seen it before, the desire itself or his giving vent to the same does not necessarily imply lack of faith in the words of that truthful man. Even so, since Arjuna had never seen that wonderful form before, the desire on his part to see it and his giving expression to that desire cannot be interpreted as having proceeded from lack of faith. On the other hand, the desire to see it presupposes his faith.

मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो ।  
योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दर्शयात्मानमव्ययम् ॥ ४ ॥

प्रभो O Lord; यदि if; मया by me; तत् that ( form ); द्रष्टुम् शक्यम् is capable of being seen; इति so; त्वम् You; मन्यसे think; ततः then; योगेश्वर O Lord of Yoga; अव्ययम् आत्मानम् that imperishable form; मे to me; दर्शय reveal.

Kṛṣṇa, if You think that it can be seen by me, then, O Lord of Yoga, reveal to me Your imperishable form. ( 4 )

The use of the vocative 'Prabho' with reference to Śrī Kṛṣṇa indicates that being the creator, preserver and destroyer of the whole creation, and the inner controller of all, He is all-powerful. Therefore, even if Arjuna was not duly qualified for a vision of that divine form, the Lord could easily render him fit for the same by His own grace and power. And by addressing Śrī Kṛṣṇa as 'Yogeshwara' Arjuna seeks to convey that being the Master of all Yogas He could, if He liked, easily enable Arjuna to see His divine form. Indeed, when even an ordinary Yogī is capable of revealing his glory in ways more than one, it should be much easier for Śrī Kṛṣṇa to do so.

As stated above, Arjuna believed that the glory of Śrī Kṛṣṇa was exactly as it had been depicted by Himself, and he entertained not the least doubt about

it. He was also convinced that even if the Lord failed to reveal that form before him, such failure on His part would neither prove that the Lord of all Masters of Yogas was incapable of doing it, nor would it detract in the least from his faith in His words. This much was, however, certain that his yearning for a vision of that divine form was irresistible. And as the knower of all hearts, it was open to the Lord to examine and ascertain whether that desire was genuine and intense. If it was found true, it established his eligibility for that vision. For, being a veritable wish-yielding tree to His devotees, the longing of the devotee's heart was all that He cared for, and no other qualifications. Arjuna, therefore, prayed that if the Lord deemed fit He should reveal that form to him.

*Thus requested by Arjuna, His supremely loving and faithful devotee, the Lord proceeds to describe His Cosmic Body in the next three verses, and enjoins Arjuna to behold the same.*

श्रीभगवानुवाच

पश्य मे पार्थ रूपाणि शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः ।  
नानाविधानि दिव्यानि नानावर्णाकृतीनि च ॥ ५ ॥

पार्थ O son of Prthā ( Kuntī ), Arjuna; अथ presently; मे My; शतशः सहस्रशः in hundreds and thousands; नानाविधानि multifarious; च and; नानावर्णाकृतीनि of diverse colours and shapes; दिव्यानि divine; रूपाणि forms; पश्य behold.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Arjuna, behold presently in hundreds and thousands My multifarious divine forms, of various colours and shapes. ( 5 )

The words 'Śataśaḥ' and 'Sahasraśaḥ' witness innumerable forms huddled together in His Cosmic Body.

The Lord thus calls upon Arjuna to The word 'Nānāvidhāni' indicates

that the forms comprised in the Cosmic Body were not homogeneous but heterogeneous in character, *i. e.*, they belonged to different species, such as gods, human beings and other lower forms of beings, both animate and inanimate.

The use of the word 'Divyāni' in this verse indicates that the multitudinous forms seen in the Cosmic Body were all marvellous and transcendent in character, having been brought forth by His wonderful power of Yoga.

पश्यादित्यान् वसून् रुद्रानश्विनौ मरुतस्तथा ।

बहून्यदृष्टपूर्वाणि पश्याश्चर्याणि भारत ॥ ६ ॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; आदित्यान् the ( twelve ) sons of Aditi; वसून् the ( eight ) Vasus; रुद्रान् the ( eleven ) Rudras; अश्विनौ the two Aświnikumāras ( the physicians of gods ); मरुतः ( and ) the Maruts ( forty-nine in number ); पश्य behold; तथा and also; बहूनि many more; अदृष्टपूर्वाणि never seen before; आश्चर्याणि marvellous forms; पश्य witness.

Behold in Me, Arjuna, the twelve sons of Aditi, the eight Vasus, the eleven Rudras ( gods of destruction ), the two Aświnikumāras\* ( the twin-born physicians of gods ) and the forty-nine Maruts ( wind-gods ), and witness many more wonderful forms never seen before. ( 6 )

The words 'Ādityān' etc. denote the principal varieties of gods residing in heaven. By naming these varieties in particular, the Lord intends to convey that all the gods of heaven were to be seen in His Cosmic Body. The individual

names of and other particulars about these principal varieties of gods have already been given in the commentary on verses 21 and 23 of Chapter X. Hence it is needless to repeat them here.

इहैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं पश्याद्य सचराचरम् ।

मम देहे गुडाकेश यच्चान्यद् द्रष्टुमिच्छसि ॥ ७ ॥

गुडाकेश O conqueror of sleep, Arjuna; अद्य now; इह here; मम देहे in My Body; एकस्थम् concentrated; सचराचरम् consisting of both animate and inanimate beings; कृत्स्नम् जगत् the entire creation; पश्य behold; च and; अन्यत् यत् whatever else; द्रष्टुम् to see; इच्छसि you desire.

Arjuna, behold as concentrated within this body of Mine the entire creation consisting of both animate and inanimate beings, and whatever else you desire to see. ( 7 )

\* The twin-born Aświnikumāras are believed to have been born of Sanjñā, wife of the sun-god ( see *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* III. ii. 7; *Agni-Purāṇa* 273. 4 ). Some authors hold that they were born of Aditi through Kaśyapa ( *Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa*, *Aranya*, XIV. 14 ); while others maintain that they sprang from Brahmā's ears ( *Vāyu-Purāṇa* LXV. 57 ). All these accounts are true, being the records of different Kalpas. The two brothers received their spiritual knowledge from the sage Dadhyang ( *Rgveda* I. XVII. 116. 12; *Devī-Bhāgavata* VII. 36 ). Propitiated by Sukanyā, daughter of King Śaryāti and wife of sage Chyavana, they rejuvenated the old and blind Chyavana and restored his vision ( *Devī-Bhāgavata* VII. 4-5 ). Many stories about these twin gods are told in the *Purāṇas*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

By addressing Arjuna as 'Gudâkeśa' the Lord invites him to observe the Cosmic Body with due care and attention, so as to leave no room for any doubt or misconception with regard to the same.

The indeclinable 'Adya' in this verse has been used in the sense of 'now'. The Lord thereby indicates that He was very prompt in revealing the form which Arjuna desired to see; in fact, He revealed it the moment Arjuna expressed the desire to see it.

The word 'Chara' stands for all creatures possessing motion, e. g., beasts, birds, insects, moths, gods and human beings etc.; while 'Achara' denotes things devoid of motion, e. g., hills, trees etc. The word 'Jagat', qualified by the adjectives 'Kṛtsnam' and 'Sacharācharam', therefore signifies the entire universe

consisting of all such creatures, together with their bodies and senses, places of enjoyment and objects of enjoyment. By inviting Arjuna to behold the entire creation in a part of His body seated before him in his chariot the Lord gave an ocular demonstration before Arjuna of the statement contained in the concluding verse of Chapter X, viz., that He held the entire universe in a fraction of His Being.

By asking Arjuna to behold whatever else he desired to see, the Lord intends to convey that, besides the universe as it existed then, Arjuna could directly perceive at that moment in a part of His Body any spectacle expressive of the Lord's virtues and glory etc., scenes of his own victory and the enemy's defeat, or any other incident relating to the past, present or future, that he should like to witness.

*When Arjuna failed to see the divine form even though repeatedly enjoined in the preceding three verses, the Lord, who is the inner witness of all and knew the cause of Arjuna's failure to see that form, now offers to bestow the gift of divine vision on him.*

न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा ।

दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ॥ ८ ॥

तु however; माम् Me; अनेन स्वचक्षुषा with these ( physical ) eyes of yours; द्रष्टुम् to perceive; न not; एव indeed; शक्यसे you are able; ते to you; दिव्यम् चक्षुः the divine eye; ददामि I vouchsafe; मे My; ऐश्वरम् योगम् divine power of Yoga; पश्य behold.

But surely you cannot see Me with these human eyes of yours; therefore, I vouchsafe to you the divine eye. With this you behold My divine power of Yoga. ( 8 )

Śrī Kṛṣṇa was glad that Arjuna sought to obtain a vision of His divine form endowed with His wonderful power of Yoga; and the Lord for His own part was prepared to reveal that form to him. But at the same time He was afraid that His transcendent form could not be seen with the ordinary human eyes, and that Arjuna lacked the faculty which was needed for obtaining a vision of that form. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

By His own power of Yoga the Lord bestowed on Arjuna a kind of Yogic faculty in order to enable him to obtain a vision of the Cosmic Body. This faculty endowed him with supernatural power and qualified him for a vision of that divine form. It is this Yogic faculty which is referred to here by the words 'Divyam Chakṣuḥ'. A similar type of divine vision was vouchsafed to Sañjaya by the divine Vedavyāsa at the commencement of the Mahābhārata war.

Arjuna saw the supreme Deity possessing many mouths and eyes, presenting many a wonderful sight, decked with many divine ornaments, wielding many uplifted divine weapons, wearing divine garlands and clothes, besmeared all over with divine sandal-pastes, full of all wonders, infinite and having faces on all sides. ( 10, 11 )

The divine form which Arjuna saw has been described as having the moon and the sun for its two principal eyes ( XI, 19 ); but apart from them, it possessed many other mouths and eyes. That is why it is called 'Anekavaktranayanam'.

A sight which has never been seen before, and which is strange and marvellous in character, is called 'Adbhutadarśanam'. In that Cosmic Body of the Lord, Arjuna beheld innumerable such sights; hence it has been called 'Anekādbhutadarśanam'.

An ornament which is exceptionally brilliant and supramundane is called a 'Divyābharana'. The form which Arjuna saw was adorned with innumerable such divine ornaments; hence it has been spoken of as 'Anekadivyaabharanam'.

Weapons used in warfare are termed as 'Āyudha'. Any such weapon exhibiting supernatural qualities and effulgence is called a 'divine weapon'. For example, the weapons of Viṣṇu, viz., the Discus, Club, Bow etc., are all divine weapons. The Lord as seen by Arjuna held in His uplifted hands many such 'divine' weapons; hence the verse refers to Him as 'Divyānekodyatāyudham'.

He who is decked with many superb, brilliant and supernatural wreaths and garments is called 'Divyamālyāmaradhara'. The Lord in His Cosmic Form had many such garlands hanging from His neck and was also clad in various kinds of beauti-

ful and shining costumes; hence the above adjective has been used with reference to Him.

Any fragrant substance which is far superior to other fragrant substances like the sandal-paste and possesses a supernatural odour which can be perceived only by a divinized sense, and not by the material senses, is called a 'Divya Gandha'. A form which is besmeared all over with fragrant substances of such a superb and divine character is known as 'Divyagandhānulepanam'.

Everything forming part of that Cosmic Body, viz., the countless mouths, eyes, ornaments, weapons, wreaths, garments and fragrant substances, was wonderful. Hence the verse describes It as 'Sarvāścharyamayam' ( full of all wonders ).

That which is infinite and is unbounded by space is called 'Ananta'. The Cosmic Body of the Lord beheld by Arjuna was limitless in dimension; hence the term 'Ananta' has been applied with reference to it.

The numberless faces forming part of that Cosmic Body of the Lord were spread all over the universe; hence He has been styled 'Viśwatomukha'.

A being possessed of lustre and worthy of adoration is called a 'Deva'. The Cosmic Body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa was supremely effulgent; hence He is referred to as 'Deva' in this verse.

*The next verse describes the effulgence of the supreme Deity manifested in that Cosmic Form.*

दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद्युगपदुत्थिता ।

यदि भाः सदृशी सा स्याद्भासस्तस्य महात्मनः ॥ १२ ॥

दिवि in the heavens; सूर्यसहस्रस्य of a thousand suns; युगपत् all at once; उत्थिता bursting forth; भाः effulgence; भवेत् if there be; सा ( even ) that; तस्य



महात्मनः of that all-pervading Lord; भासः to the splendour; सदृशी approximating; यदि hardly; स्यात् would prove.

If there be the effulgence of a thousand suns bursting forth all at once in the heavens, even that would hardly approach the splendour of the mighty Lord. (12)

By comparing the splendour of the Lord with the effulgence of a thousand suns appearing all at once in the sky the verse practically declares it as incomparable. In other words, just as a thousand stars twinkling together in the sky cannot compare with the sun, even so the effulgence of a thousand suns shining all at once in the sky could not approach the splendour of the Cosmic Body of the Lord. The reason for this is that while the effulgence of the sun is transient, material and finite, the splendour of the Cosmic Body of the Lord was eternal, divine, transcendent and infinite.

*Saṅjaya now proceeds to describe how Arjuna beheld the entire universe in that brilliant and wonderful form of the Lord.*

तत्रैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं प्रविभक्तमनेकधा ।

अपश्यद्देवदेवस्य शरीरे पाण्डवस्तदा ॥ १३ ॥

पाण्डवः the son of Pāṇḍu, Arjuna; तदा then; अनेकधा manifold; प्रविभक्तम् divided; कृत्स्नम् जगत् the whole universe; देवदेवस्य of the supreme Deity, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa; तत्र शरीरे in that Body; एकस्थम् concentrated at one place; अपश्यत् beheld.

Concentrated at one place in the person of that supreme Deity, Arjuna then beheld the whole universe with its manifold divisions. (13)

The word 'Tadā' (then) refers to the time when the Lord blessed Arjuna with the divine eye, and invited him to behold His Cosmic Body together with His wonderful power of Yoga (XI. 8).

The use of the qualifications 'Anekadhā Pravibhaktam' and 'Kṛtsnam' with the word 'Jagat' is intended to convey that Arjuna beheld, in the person of the supreme Deity, the entire universe with its manifold divisions in the shape of enjoyers like the gods, human beings, beasts, birds, moths, insects and trees etc., places of enjoyment (of pleasure and pain) like the earth, the intermediate region, heaven and the lower or subterranean regions and the innumerable objects of their enjoyment. In other words, it was not that he saw only a particular part of the universe, or that he saw all these

divisions jumbled together in a confused mass, but he saw the universe extended as it is, with all its details clearly defined.

Arjuna actually saw with his divine eye what he was told by the Lord at the end of Chapter X, viz., that He stood holding the entire universe in a part of His being. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the word 'Ekastham' (concentrated at one place) in the present verse.

The indeclinable 'Tatra' connects the verse with the description contained in the foregoing verses and qualifies the person of the supreme Deity, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the best of all persons, and the object of worship even of the highest gods like Brahmā.

*The next verse describes the sequel to the perception by Arjuna of the Cosmic Body of the Lord as stated above.*

ततः स विस्मयाविष्टो हृष्टरोमा धनंजयः ।

प्रणम्य शिरसा देवं कृताञ्जलिर्भाषत ॥ १४ ॥

ततः thereafter; सः that; विस्मयाविष्टः overcome with wonder; हृष्टरोमा with the hair standing on end; धनंजयः Arjuna (*lit.*, a conqueror of riches); देवम् the shining Lord; शिरसा with his head (bent low); प्रणम्य making obeisance to; कृताञ्जलिः with his palms joined together; भाषत spoke.

Then Arjuna, full of wonder and with the hair standing on end, reverentially bowed his head to the divine Lord, and with joined palms addressed Him thus. ( 14 )

The use of the word 'Tataḥ' (thereafter) in this verse is intended to show how the sight of that wonderful and glorious form of the Lord reacted on Arjuna's mind and body.

Arjuna had accumulated untold riches by conquering a number of princes. This earned him the title of 'Dhanañjaya'. Again, the use of the adjectives 'Vismayāviṣṭaḥ' and 'Hṛṣṭaromā' with 'Dhanañjayaḥ' is intended to show that Arjuna was overwhelmed with joy and wonder at the sight of that divine form. Arjuna had never seen such a glorious form of the Lord before; hence the sight of that form impressed his mind to a certain extent with the infinite glory of the Lord. In other words, he now appreciated the divine glory even though partially. Hence his joy and wonder knew no bounds.

The word 'Devam' in the present verse refers to the all-effulgent Cosmic Body of the Lord. The sight of that majestic Form of the Lord, full of innumerable wonderful sights, supremely effulgent and invested with infinite glory, created such a deep impression on Arjuna's mind that the sentiment of friendship he had cherished for the Lord from his early days vanished all of a sudden as it were from his heart, and he looked very small in his own eyes in comparison with the infinite glory of the Lord. He was inspired with a feeling of deep reverence for the Lord, and the intensity of that feeling reacting on his frame like an electric current bent down his head that very moment and laid it at the feet of the Lord. Thereafter with joined palms he began to offer his praises to the Lord with utmost humility and reverence.

*Thus overwhelmed with joy and wonder, and describing the sights seen by him within the Lord's Cosmic Body, Arjuna now offers his praises to that Form.*

अर्जुन उवाच

पश्यामि देवांस्तव देव देहे सर्वांस्तथा भूतविशेषसङ्घान् ।

ब्रह्माण्मीशं कमलासनस्थमृषींश्च सर्वानुरगांश्च दिव्यान् ॥ १५ ॥

देव O Lord; तव देहे within Your person; सर्वान् देवान् all gods; तथा and; भूतविशेषसङ्घान् hosts of different beings; कमलासनस्थम् perched on his lotus-seat; ब्रह्माणम् Brahmā (the creator); ईशम् Lord Śiva; च and; सर्वान् ऋषीन् all Ṛṣis; च and; दिव्यान् celestial; उरगान् serpents; पश्यामि I behold.

Arjuna said : Lord, I behold within Your body all gods and hosts of different beings, Brahmā throned on his lotus-seat, Śiva and all Ṛṣis and celestial serpents. (15)

The use of the vocative 'Deva' for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is indicative of the feeling of extreme reverence and devotion which inspired Arjuna at the sight of the effulgent and wonderful form of the Lord.

The words 'Tava Dehe' indicate that Arjuna beheld all the sights described by him in this verse in the very body of the Lord present before his eyes.

Of the various orders of creation inhabiting the universe, gods are recognized as the best and the highest. That is the reason why Arjuna mentions them apart from the multitudes of different beings, in which they are also included.

Similarly, Brahmā and Śiva are objects of adoration even for the gods and fall in the category of divine beings; hence they have been mentioned apart from the gods with whom they are generally ranked. The lotus-seat on which

Brahmā is said to be throned is none other than the lotus sprung from the navel of Bhagavān Viṣṇu. The use of the adjective 'Kamalāsana-stham' (throned on his lotus-seat) with 'Brahmānam', therefore, shows that Arjuna beheld in the body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa not only Brahmā but his progenitor Viṣṇu as well, who is only another form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Among earthly beings Ṛṣis are regarded as the best; and even so celestial serpents like Vāsuki and others rank as the highest among the denizens of the nether worlds. That is why they have been mentioned apart from the multitudes of different beings, in which they are naturally included.

By mentioning thus the principal types of beings inhabiting the earth, the celestial regions and the nether worlds, Arjuna shows that he beheld all the three worlds in the body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

अनेकबाहूदरवक्त्रनेत्रं पश्यामि त्वां सर्वतोऽनन्तरूपम् ।

नान्तं न मध्यं न पुनस्तर्वादिं पश्यामि विश्वेश्वर विश्वरूप ॥ १६ ॥

विश्वेश्वर O Lord of the universe; त्वाम् You; अनेकबाहूदरवक्त्रनेत्रम् endowed with numerous arms, bellies, mouths and eyes; सर्वतः अनन्तरूपम् (and) having innumerable forms extended on all sides; पश्यामि I see; विश्वरूप O Lord manifested in the form of the universe; तव Your; न neither; अन्तम् the end; न nor; मध्यम् the middle; न nor; पुनः again; आदिम् the beginning; पश्यामि I behold.

O Lord of the universe, I see You endowed with numerous arms, bellies, mouths, and eyes and having innumerable forms extended on all sides. I see neither Your beginning nor middle, nor even Your end, manifested as You are in the form of the universe. (16)

The use of the vocatives 'Viśveśwara' and 'Viśwarūpa' with reference to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is intended to convey that He is the creator and destroyer as well as the supreme Ruler of the whole universe, appointing all to their respective duties, and that this universe is, really speaking, nothing but His own manifestation, that

is to say, He is both its efficient and material cause.

The statement that Arjuna saw no beginning, middle or end of the Lord shows that the Cosmic Body of the Lord was infinite on all sides. Arjuna saw no limit to it.

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रिणं च तेजोराशिं सर्वतो दीप्तिमन्तम् ।

पश्यामि त्वां दुर्निरीक्ष्यं समन्ताद्दीप्तानलार्कद्युतिमप्रमेयम् ॥ १७ ॥

त्वाम् You; किरीटिनम् adorned with diadems; गदिनम् armed with clubs; च and; चक्रिणम् wielding discuses; सर्वतः all round; दीप्तिमन्तम् flaming; तेजोराशिम् a mass of splendour; दीप्तानलार्कद्युतिम् having the brilliance of a blazing fire and the sun; दुर्निरीक्ष्यम् hard to gaze at; समन्तात् on all sides; अप्रमेयम् immeasurable; पश्यामि I behold.

I see You endowed with diadems, clubs and discuses, a mass of splendour flaming all round, having the brilliance of a blazing fire and the sun, hard to gaze at and immeasurable on all sides. ( 17 )

By speaking of the Lord as 'Kiriṭīnam', 'Gadinam' and 'Chakriṇam' Arjuna shows that He retained the famous emblems of Bhagavān Viṣṇu even in that wonderful form.

The adjective 'Diptānalārkaadyutim' has been used over and above 'Sarvato Dīptimantam' and 'Tejorāśim' just in order to give an accurate idea of the splendour and brilliance of the Cosmic Body. The splendour and brilliance of the Cosmic Body resembled the effulgence of a blazing fire and the sun only in kind and not in degree; It was infinitely more resplendent than the latter. The brilliance of fire and the sun is visible only in a particular part of the universe, whereas the brilliance of the Cosmic Body could

be seen everywhere and on all sides.

Clothed as it was with a most wonderful type of effulgence, that resplendent form of the Lord dazzled the human eyes; they could not bear its sight. Hence it has been spoken of as 'Durnirīkṣyam' (difficult to gaze at) for the common man. Arjuna, however, was blessed with the divine eye only for a vision of that Form; and it was with that eye that he perceived It. Hence, though producing a blinding effect on the eyes of others, it was not so in the case of Arjuna.

By speaking of the Lord as 'Samantāt Aprameyam' Arjuna indicates that it was not possible by any means to know His virtues, glory, power and identity in their entirety.

त्वमक्षरं परमं वेदितव्यं त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।

त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता सनातनस्त्वं पुरुषो मतो मे ॥ १८ ॥

त्वम् You ( are ); वेदितव्यम् worthy of being known; परमम् अक्षरम् the supreme Indestructible or God; त्वम् You ( are ); अस्य विश्वस्य of this universe; परम् निधानम् the ultimate refuge; त्वम् You ( are ); शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता the protector of the ageless Dharma; त्वम् You; अव्ययः imperishable; सनातनः पुरुषः the eternal Being; मे मतः are considered by me.

You are the supreme indestructible worthy of being known; You are the ultimate refuge of this universe. You are, again, the protector of the ageless Dharma; I consider You to be the eternal imperishable Being. ( 18 )

The word 'Akṣaram', qualified by the stands for the absolute and formless adjectives 'Veditavyam' and 'Paramam', supreme Divinity or Brahma, the embodi-

ment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, the ultimate Reality which souls aspiring for liberation seek to know and for the knowledge of which seekers of Truth devote themselves to various forms of spiritual practice, and which has been referred to as Brahma in VIII. 3. By predicating this term of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Arjuna shows that the sight of His Cosmic Body had convinced him of His identity with the Absolute or supreme Brahma.

'Nidhāna' means a resting-place or refuge. By speaking of the Lord as the 'Nidhāna' or ultimate resort of this universe Arjuna shows that the entire universe both as cause and effect, rests in God, and is sustained by Him; hence

He is its ultimate resort.

The religion propounded by the Vedas has existed from time without beginning and shall exist forever. Hence it has been referred to here as 'Śāśwata Dharma' or 'Sanātana Dharma' as it is now called. Descending again and again on this earth God Himself protects this Dharma; hence Arjuna speaks of Him here as 'Śāśwatadharmagoptā' or Protector of the eternal Religion.

By referring to Śrī Kṛṣṇa as 'Avyaya Sanātana Puruṣa' Arjuna shows that He was no other than God Almighty, otherwise known as the eternal supreme Puruṣa, the imperishable and immutable creator and destroyer of the universe.

अनादिमध्यान्तमनन्तवीर्यमनन्तबाहुं शशिसूर्यनेत्रम् ।

पश्यामि त्वां दीप्तहुताशवक्त्रं स्वतेजसा विश्वमिदं तपन्तम् ॥ १९ ॥

त्वाम् You; अनादिमध्यान्तम् having no beginning, middle or end; अनन्तवीर्यम् possessing unlimited prowess; अनन्तबाहुम् endowed with numberless arms; शशिसूर्यनेत्रम् having the sun and the moon for one's eyes; दीप्तहुताशवक्त्रम् having blazing fire for one's mouth; स्वतेजसा by one's radiance; इदम् विश्वम् this universe; तपन्तम् scorching; पश्यामि I behold.

I see You without beginning, middle or end, possessing unlimited prowess and endowed with numberless arms, having the moon and the sun for Your eyes, and blazing fire for Your mouth, and scorching this universe by Your radiance. ( 19 )

In verse 16 Arjuna has already told the Lord that he saw neither His beginning nor middle nor end, and he repeats the same thing in the present verse as well when he says that he saw Him without beginning, middle or end. On closer examination, however, it will be found that the latter statement is no mere repetition of the former. While the former statement was intended to bring out the infinitude of His Cosmic Body, the present verse seeks to convey that He is entirely free from the six types of modification such as birth etc., and therefore eternal. Of the three substantives forming part of the compound word 'Anādimadhyāntam', 'Ādi' denotes the first type, viz., birth; 'Madhya' represents

the four intermediate stages of existence, growth, transformation and decay; while 'Anta' stands for the last stage of destruction or death. He who is free from all these modifications is called 'Anādimadhyānta'. Therefore, the real meaning of Arjuna's statement in this verse is that he sees the Lord as entirely free from the six types of modification, viz., birth, existence, growth, transformation, decay and death.

The word 'Vīrya' is a comprehensive term covering different shades of meaning, viz., prowess, strength, glory and energy etc. By speaking of the Lord as 'Anantavīrya' in this verse Arjuna seeks to convey that His prowess, strength,

energy and glory were unlimited.

Although the form which Arjuna saw had faces on all sides, as stated in verse 11 above, the chief of them had the sun

and the moon as its two eyes, and its mouth burning like blazing fire. This is what is meant by speaking of the Lord as 'Śaśisūryānetra' and 'Diptahūtāsāvakra'.

द्यावापृथिव्योरिदमन्तरं हि व्याप्तं त्वयैकेन दिशश्च सर्वाः ।

दृष्ट्वाद्भुतं रूपमुग्रं तवेदं लोकत्रयं प्रव्यथितं महात्मन् ॥ २० ॥

महात्मन् O Soul of the universe; इदम् this; द्यावापृथिव्योः अन्तरम् the space between heaven and earth; च and; सर्वाः दिशः all the quarters; एकैः त्वया by You alone; हि indeed; व्याप्तम् is filled; तव Your; इदम् this; अद्भुतम् transcendent; उग्रम् terrible; रूपम् form; दृष्ट्वा seeing; लोकत्रयम् all the three worlds; प्रव्यथितम् feel alarmed.

Yonder space between heaven and earth and all the quarters are entirely filled by You alone. Seeing this transcendent, dreadful Form of Yours, O Soul of the universe, all the three worlds feel greatly alarmed. ( 20 )

अमी हि त्वां सुरसङ्घा विशन्ति केचिद्भीताः प्राञ्जलयो गृणन्ति ।

स्वस्तीत्युक्त्वा महर्षिसिद्धसङ्घाः स्तुवन्ति त्वां स्तुतिभिः पुष्कलाभिः ॥ २१ ॥

अमी those; हि very; सुरसङ्घाः hosts of gods; त्वाम् You; विशन्ति enter; केचित् ( while ) some; भीताः terrified; प्राञ्जलयः with palms joined together; गृणन्ति utter ( Your names and praises ); महर्षिसिद्धसङ्घाः hosts of Mahārṣis and Siddhas; स्वस्ति 'Let there be peace'; इति so; उक्त्वा saying; पुष्कलाभिः स्तुतिभिः through excellent hymns; त्वाम् You; स्तुवन्ति extol.

Yonder hosts of gods are entering You; some with palms joined out of fear are uttering Your names and glories. Multitudes of Mahārṣis and Siddhas, saying 'Let there be peace', are extolling You by means of excellent hymns. ( 21 )

The demonstrative adjective 'Ami' is used with reference to objects that lie beyond the range of one's sight. By using this word with 'Surasanghāḥ' Arjuna seeks to convey that he saw those very gods whom he had seen some years back during his visit to heaven.

the Lord and tried to propitiate Him in that way. This is what Arjuna meant by his statement that some with palms joined out of fear were uttering the Lord's names and praises.

Seeing hosts of gods entering the terrible form of the Lord the rest of them lost all hope of surviving their companions long, and the thought of their impending doom filled them with fear. With joined palms, therefore, they began to utter the names and glories of

Arjuna further saw that multitudes of Mahārṣis like Marichi, Angirā and Bhṛgu, and Siddhas of all descriptions, known as well as unknown, on the other hand, far from being seized with fear at the sight of that terrible form, were praying for the well-being of the whole universe and singing paeans of praise to

the Lord, knowing as they did the real is meant by the latter half of this secret of His identity. This is what verse.

रुद्रादित्या वसवो ये च साध्या विश्वेऽश्विनौ मरुतश्चोष्मपाश्च ।

गन्धर्वयक्षासुरसिद्धसङ्गा वीक्षन्ते त्वां विस्मिताश्चैव सर्वे ॥ २२ ॥

ये who; रुद्रादित्याः the ( eleven ) Rudras and the ( twelve ) sons of Aditi; च and; वसवः the ( eight ) Vasus; साध्याः the Sādhyas; विश्वे the Viśwedevas; अश्विनौ the two Aświnikumāras; च and; मरुतः the Maruts ( wind-gods ); च and; ऊष्मपाः the manes; च as well as; गन्धर्वयक्षासुरसिद्धसङ्गाः multitudes of Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Asuras and Siddhas; सर्वे all ( these ); एव indeed; विस्मिताः amazed; त्वाम् You; वीक्षन्ते gaze upon.

The eleven Rudras, twelve Ādityas and eight Vasus, the Sādhyas and Viśwedevas, the two Aświnikumāras and forty-nine Maruts, as well as the manes and multitudes of Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Asuras and Siddhas, all these gaze upon You in amazement. (22)

Brief notes on four of the twelve classes of superhuman beings mentioned in this verse, viz., the Rudras, Ādityas, Vasus and Maruts have already been given in the commentaries on verses 21 and 23 of Chapter X, and in the footnote below the 21st; while the Aświnikumāras have been dealt with in the footnote below XI. 6. The names of the twelve Sādhyas are Manas, Anumantā, Prāṇa, Nara, Yāna, Chitti, Haya, Naya, Hamsa, Nārāyaṇa, Prabhava and Vibhu'.\* And the ten Viśwedevas are Kratu, Dakṣa, Śrava, Satya, Kāla, Kāma, Dhuni, Kuruvān, Prabhavān and Rochamāna.† The Sādhyas

and Viśwedevas represent two of the eight divisions of celestials mentioned in this verse ( see *Brahmāṇḍa*, LXXI, 2 ).

Those who eat hot and steaming rice are called Ūṣmapās. The *Code of Manu* ( III. 237 ) says that the manes eat hot rice. Hence the word 'Ūṣmapāḥ' in this verse should be taken to represent the manes† in general.

The Gandharvas are believed to have been born of the three wives of Kaśyapa, viz., Muni, Prādhā and Ariṣṭā. They have expert knowledge of the different melodies and are supposed to be proficient in the

\* मनोऽनुमन्ता प्राणश्च नरो यानश्च वीर्यवान् ॥

चित्तिर्हयो नयश्चैव हंसो नारायणस्तथा । प्रभवोऽथ विभुश्चैव साध्या द्वादश जज्ञिरे ॥

( *Vāyu*, LXVI. 15-16 )

The twelve Sādhyas mentioned in the above verse were born of the womb of Dakṣa's daughter Sādhya, the consort of Dharma. The *Skanda-Purāṇa* gives slightly different names, viz., Manas, Anumantā, Prāṇa, Nara, Apāna, Bhakti, Bhaya, Anagha, Hamsa, Nārāyaṇa, Vibhu and Prabhu ( *Skanda*, *Prabhāsa*, XXI. 17-18 ). The difference can be easily explained by the difference of Manvantaras.

† विश्वेदेवास्तु विश्वाया जज्ञिरे दश विश्रुताः ।

ऋतुर्दक्षः श्रवः सत्यः कालः कामो धुनिस्तथा । कुरुवान् प्रभवाश्चैव रोचमानश्च ते दश ॥

( *Vāyu*, LXVI. 31-32 )

The ten Viśwedevas were born of the womb of Dharma's wife Viśvā, daughter of Dakṣa. Some Purāṇas give altogether different names. The difference is due to the difference of Manvantaras.

† The names of the principal manes have been given in the commentary on X. 29.

arts of dancing and instrumental music prevalent in heaven. The Yakṣas are believed to have been born of sage Kaśyapa's wife Khasā. They are also represented in the suite of attendants of Bhagavān Śankara. Kubera is the recognized head of the Yakṣas and noble Rākṣasas. The Daityas, Dānavas and

Rākṣasas, who are the sworn enemies of the Devas, are collectively known as the Asuras. The offspring of Kaśyapa's wife Diti are called Daityas, while those of Danu are named as Dānavas. The Rākṣasas were born in diverse ways. Kapila and others are known by the name of 'Siddha'.

रूपं महत्ते बहुवक्त्रनेत्रं महाबाहो बहुबाहुरूपादम् ।

बहूदरं बहुदंष्ट्रकरालं दृष्ट्वा लोकाः प्रव्यथितास्तथाहम् ॥ २३ ॥

महाबाहो O mighty-armed Lord; ते Your; बहुवक्त्रनेत्रम् having many mouths and eyes; बहुबाहुरूपादम् endowed with numerous arms, thighs and feet; बहूदरम् having a number of bellies; बहुदंष्ट्रकरालम् looking fierce with many teeth; महत् colossal; रूपम् form; दृष्ट्वा seeing; लोकाः (all) the worlds; प्रव्यथिताः are terrified; तथा as well as; अहम् I.

Lord, seeing this stupendous and dreadful Form of Yours, possessing numerous mouths and eyes, many arms, thighs and feet, many bellies and many teeth, the worlds are terror-struck; so am I. ( 23 )

Although Arjuna has already represented the Cosmic Body in verse 16 as possessed of numerous arms, bellies, faces and eyes, he only described in that verse the details of that form as seen by him; whereas the present verse speaks of all the worlds and of Arjuna himself being terrified at the sight of that Form. That is the apology for his repeating the same idea in this verse.

Even so in verse 20 Arjuna has already spoken of all the three worlds feeling greatly alarmed at the limitless expanse and dreadfulness of that Form. In the present verse, however, he speaks of himself too being terrified at the sight of the numerous faces, eyes, arms, thighs, feet, bellies and teeth of that terrible Form. This exonerates him from the charge of redundancy.

नमःस्पृशं दीप्तमनेकवर्णं व्यात्ताननं दीप्तविशालनेत्रम् ।

दृष्ट्वा हि त्वां प्रव्यथितान्तरात्मा धृतिं न विन्दामि शमं च विष्णो ॥ २४ ॥

हि because; विष्णो O Viṣṇu (lit., all-pervading Lord); नमःस्पृशम् touching the heavens; दीप्तम् radiant; अनेकवर्णम् multi-coloured; व्यात्ताननम् having one's mouth wide open; दीप्तविशालनेत्रम् possessing large flaming eyes; त्वाम् You; दृष्ट्वा seeing; प्रव्यथितान्तरात्मा having one's inner self frightened; धृतिम् self-control; च and; शमम् peace; न not; विन्दामि I find.

Lord, seeing Your Form reaching the heavens, effulgent, multi-coloured, having its mouth wide open and possessing large flaming eyes, I, with my inmost self frightened, have lost self-control and find no peace. ( 24 )

By addressing the Lord as 'Viṣṇu' (the Protector of the universe) Himself Arjuna seeks to convey that it was Viṣṇu who appeared on earth in the form of



Śrī Kṛṣṇa in order to lighten the burden of the earth. Arjuna thereby made a covert suggestion that the Lord should conceal His Cosmic Body and manifest Himself in the form of Viṣṇu in order to relieve his agony.

Although in verse 20 above Arjuna has already indicated the immeasurable height of the Lord by declaring that the entire space between heaven and earth was filled by Him alone, he only spoke of all the three worlds feeling greatly alarmed at the sight of the inordinate length and breadth of the Cosmic Body; while the present verse speaks of Arjuna's being frightened himself, losing his self-control and finding no peace at the sight of that terrible Form. That is the justification for his describing the tremendous

height of that Form once more in this verse.

Even so in verse 17 above Arjuna simply referred to the all-round effulgence of the Form as seen by him; whereas the present verse speaks of his own loss of self-control and presence of mind. That is the apology for using in this verse the adjective 'Diptam', which is only a repetition of 'Diptimantam' used in the latter verse.

Similarly, even though Arjuna has already expressed his fright at the sight of the tremendous size of the Cosmic Body, he mentions in the present verse the additional fact of his losing self-control and peace of mind. That justifies to a certain extent the repetition of the word 'Pravyathita' as a member of a compound in this verse.

दंष्ट्राकरालानि च ते मुखानि दृष्ट्वैव कालानलसंनिभानि ।

दिशो न जाने न लभे च शर्म प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥ २५ ॥

दंष्ट्राकरालानि frightful on account of their teeth; च and; कालानलसंनिभानि blazing like the huge fires at the time of universal destruction; ते Your; मुखानि faces; दृष्ट्वा seeing; दिशः the quarters; न जाने I am at a loss to discern; च and; शर्म happiness; एव even; न not; लभे I find; देवेश O Lord of celestials; जगन्निवास O Resting-place of the universe; प्रसीद be pleased.

Seeing Your faces frightful on account of their teeth, and flaring like the fire at the time of universal destruction, I am utterly bewildered and find no happiness; therefore, be kind to me, O Lord of celestials and Resting-place of the universe. ( 25 )

Although in verse 23 Arjuna has already referred to the dreadful aspect of the Lord's numerous faces, he simply spoke therein of his being frightened at the sight of those faces; whereas in the present verse he mentions the additional fact of his bewilderment and loss of happiness. That accounts to a certain extent for the repetition of the word 'Bahudaṁṣṭrākarālam' occurring in verse 23 as 'Daṁṣṭrākarālam' in this verse,

although such repetitions are mainly attributable to his confused state of mind.

Arjuna had already heard from authoritative sources that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was the all-pervading Lord of all celestials, and the ultimate refuge of the entire universe, and also believed that it was so. Now that he directly perceived His Cosmic Body, no doubt was left in his mind about His being the Lord of celestials

and the abode of the universe. This is what he seeks to convey by the use of the vocatives 'Deveśa' and 'Jagannivāsa' for the Lord.

Although Arjuna had thus witnessed the divine glory of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the sight of His Cosmic Body had reduced him to

a very sad plight. His self-control and presence of mind had taken leave of him, and he felt utterly amazed and confused. He, therefore, now implores Śrī Kṛṣṇa to have mercy on him and withdraw His terrible Cosmic Form from before his eyes. This is what is meant by his asking Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be kind to him.

अमी च त्वां धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राः सर्वे सहैवावनिपालसङ्घैः ।

भीष्मो द्रोणः सूतपुत्रस्तथासौ सहास्रदीयैरपि योधमुख्यैः ॥ २६ ॥

वक्त्राणि ते त्वरमाणा विशन्ति दंष्ट्राकरालानि भयानकानि ।

केचिद्विलग्ना दशनान्तरेषु संदृश्यन्ते चूर्णितैरुत्तमाङ्गैः ॥ २७ ॥

अमी those; सर्वे all; एव indeed; धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राः the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra; अवनिपालसङ्घैः सह with hosts of kings; त्वाम् (are entering) You; च and; भीष्मः the granduncle Bhīṣma; द्रोणः the preceptor Droṇa; तथा as well as; असौ that; सूतपुत्रः Karna (*lit.*, the foster-child of a charioteer); अस्मदीयैः ranging on our side; अपि as well; योधमुख्यैः सह with the principal warriors; त्वरमाणाः rushing headlong; ते Your; दंष्ट्राकरालानि terrible on account of their teeth; भयानकानि fearful; वक्त्राणि mouths; विशन्ति are entering (into); केचित् (while) some; चूर्णितैः उत्तमाङ्गैः with (their) heads crushed; दशनान्तरेषु in the gaps between Your teeth; विलग्नाः stuck up; संदृश्यन्ते are seen.

All those sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra with hosts of kings are entering You. Bhīṣma, Droṇa and yonder Karna, with the principal warriors on our side as well, are rushing headlong into Your fearful mouths looking all the more terrible on account of their teeth; some are seen stuck up in the gaps between Your teeth with their heads crushed. ( 26, 27 )

The words 'Ami Dhṛtarāṣṭrasya Putrāḥ' occurring in this verse should be taken to mean those very sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra whom Arjuna had seen standing in battle array only a moment ago.

The word 'Avanipālasanghah' refers to those hosts of kings who had joined the army of Duryodhana as his allies and comrades in arms.

The patriarch Bhīṣma, and Āchārya Droṇa, the common preceptor of the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas both, were the

greatest and principal warriors on the Kaurava side. According to Arjuna, it was most difficult to vanquish or kill them. That is the apology for his making special mention of these two warriors.

Again, Arjuna entertained a natural feeling of rivalry in respect of the great hero and warrior Karna. The words 'Asau Sūtaputraḥ' should, therefore, be taken to mean that Karna who in the eyes of Arjuna had exaggerated notions of his own valour and entertained a very low opinion of other great warriors.

*In the next two verses Arjuna illustrates the way in which he found the warriors on both sides entering the dreadful mouths of the Lord, first by the analogy of rivers coursing towards the sea, and then by that of moths rushing into the blazing fire.*

यथा नदीनां बहवोऽम्बुवेगाः समुद्रमेवामिमुखा द्रवन्ति ।

तथा तवामी नरलोकवीरा विशन्ति वक्त्राण्यभिविज्वलन्ति ॥ २८ ॥

यथा as; नदीनाम् of rivers; बहवः myriad; अम्बुवेगाः streams; समुद्रम् अभिमुखाः in the direction of the ocean; एव only; द्रवन्ति rush; तथा so; अमी those; नरलोकवीराः warriors of the mortal world; तव Your; अभिविज्वलन्ति flaming on all sides; वक्त्राणि mouths; विशन्ति enter.

As the myriad streams of rivers rush towards the sea alone, so do those warriors of the mortal world enter Your flaming mouths. (28)

The present verse speaks of the entry, into the mouths of the Lord, of Bhiṣma, Droṇa and other notable warriors, who had been striving for God-Realization and were compelled to take up arms much against their will, and who were destined to attain union with God by falling on the battle-field. That is why they have been glorified as 'Naralokavirāḥ' (warriors of the mortal world). Distinguished as they were in the trial of physical strength, they were equally brave in fighting their internal foes in the shape of lust, anger etc., and had thus won their laurels in the field of spiritual struggle for God-Realization as well. By applying the analogy of rivers rushing towards the ocean in their case, Arjuna shows that like

rivers, which have a natural tendency to flow towards the ocean and finally lose their names and identity in the ocean, those valiant devotees too were marching with their faces turned towards God and eventually attaining union with Him.

By speaking of the mouths of the Lord as flaming on all sides (Abhivijwalanti) Arjuna shows that just as the ocean is full of water on all sides, and the waters of the rivers become one with it on entering it, even so the mouths of the Lord were blazing furiously on all sides, and the brave devotees who entered them lost their external forms in the flames of those blazing mouths and, becoming fiery themselves, attained oneness with Him.

यथा प्रदीप्तं ज्वलनं पतङ्गा विशन्ति नाशाय समुद्रवेगाः ।

तथैव नाशाय विशन्ति लोकास्तवापि वक्त्राणि समुद्रवेगाः ॥ २९ ॥

यथा as; पतङ्गाः moths; नाशाय for extinction (out of their folly); प्रदीप्तम् ज्वलनम् the blazing fire; समुद्रवेगाः with quickened speed; विशन्ति rush into; तथा एव even so; लोकाः (all these) people; अपि too; नाशाय for annihilation; तव Your; वक्त्राणि mouths; समुद्रवेगाः with great rapidity; विशन्ति enter.

As moths rush with great speed into the blazing fire for extinction out of their folly, even so all these people are with great rapidity entering Your mouths to meet their doom. (29)

The present verse speaks of the entry into the mouths of the Lord of those ordinary warriors, other than the devotees of God mentioned in the preceding verse, who had voluntarily entered the war and were going to meet their doom. It is therefore that Arjuna compares them with moths, who foolishly court their own destruction.

*Describing thus with the help of illustrations the entry into the Lord's mouths the Lord of warriors in both the armies, Arjuna now reveals the process of their destruction by the Lord.*

लेलिह्यसे ग्रसमानः समन्ताल्लोकान् समग्रान् वदनैर्ज्वलद्भिः ।

तेजोभिरापूर्य जगत्समग्रं भासस्तवोग्राः प्रतपन्ति विष्णो ॥ ३० ॥

समग्रान् लोकान् all those people; ज्वलद्भिः वदनैः through Your blazing mouths; ग्रसमानः devouring; समन्तात् on all sides; लेलिह्यसे You lick; विष्णो O Viṣṇu (all-pervading Lord); तव Your: उग्राः भासः terrible splendours; समग्रम् जगत् the entire universe; तेजोभिः with radiance; आपूर्य filling; प्रतपन्ति are burning.

Swallowing through Your blazing mouths, You are licking all those people on all sides. Lord, Your terrible splendours are burning the entire universe, filling it with radiance. ( 30 )

*Requested by Arjuna in verse 3 above to reveal His glorious divine form, the Lord manifested His Cosmic Body before him; but the very sight of that dreadful form struck terror into his heart, and filled him with curiosity as to who Śrī Kṛṣṇa really was and what He proposed to do with that most terrible form of His. Accordingly, he now approaches the Lord with the following question:—*

आख्याहि मे को भवानुग्ररूपो नमोऽस्तु ते देववर प्रसीद ।

विज्ञातुमिच्छामि भवन्तमाद्यं न हि प्रजानामि तव प्रवृत्तिम् ॥ ३१ ॥

मे me; आख्याहि tell; भवान् You; उग्ररूपः possessing such a terrible form; कः who; देववर O best of gods; ते to You; नमः obeisance; अस्तु let there be; प्रसीद be pleased; आद्यम् the Primal Being; भवन्तम् You; विज्ञातुम् to know in particular; इच्छामि I desire; हि because; तव Your; प्रवृत्तिम् purpose; न not; प्रजानामि I know.

Tell me who You are with a form so terrible. My obeisance to You, O best of gods; be kind to me. I wish to know You, the Primal Being, in particular; for I know not Your purpose. ( 31 )

Arjuna really did not know the frightful form in which he saw the motive of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in revealing that warriors on both sides meet with their

doom, and what He proposed to do in the Lord when he says: "I know not the immediate future. Arjuna, therefore, seeks enlightenment on this point from Your purpose."

*Showing the reason for His assuming the terrible form, the Lord now answers Arjuna's queries in a serial order.*

श्रीभगवानुवाच

कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो लोकान् समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः ।

ऋतेऽपि त्वां न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः ॥ ३२ ॥

लोकक्षयकृत् the destroyer of the worlds; प्रवृद्धः inflamed; कालः Kāla (the eternal Time-Spirit); अस्मि I am; इह at this time; लोकान् (these) people; समाहर्तुम् to exterminate; प्रवृत्तः (I am) out; ये who; प्रत्यनीकेषु in the enemy's ranks; अवस्थिताः arrayed; योधाः warriors (there are); सर्वे all (those); त्वाम् you; ऋते without; अपि even; न भविष्यन्ति shall not survive.

Śrī Bhagavān said: I am inflamed Kāla (the eternal Time-Spirit), the destroyer of the worlds. I am out to exterminate these people. Even without you all those warriors arrayed in the enemy's camp must die. (32)

The statement "I am inflamed Kāla, the destroyer of the worlds" answers the first part of Arjuna's query, viz. "Who are you?" The Lord thereby seeks to convey that He was God Himself, the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the whole universe. At that particular moment, however, He was playing the role of the Destroyer, Kāla.

The Lord's assertion that He was out to exterminate people supplies the answer to the second part of Arjuna's query implied in the words "I know not Your purpose". He thereby intends to convey that all His efforts at that moment were directed towards exterminating people and that it was to bring home this truth to him that He had shown to Arjuna the hideous sight of universal destruction on the screen of His Cosmic Body.

It will be remembered here that Arjuna was seized with a fit of faint-heartedness when he saw his own pre-

ceptors, uncles, cousins and other relatives arrayed for battle, and was more or less inclined to retire from the field of battle. The Lord warns him against such a course by telling him that he would not be able to save his kinsmen even if he desisted from war and refused to strike them; for their doom had been sealed. When the Lord Himself was bent upon their destruction, their chances for survival were nil. Therefore, Arjuna would do well not to retire from the battle, and his true interests lay in taking up arms against the enemy at the Lord's behest. This is what the Lord seeks to impress on Arjuna's mind by the latter half of this verse.

Even though Arjuna beheld in the Cosmic Body of the Lord the warriors on both sides rushing to meet their doom, the Lord refers in this verse to the warriors of the Kaurava army alone. The reason is not far to seek. Since the warriors on his own side were not likely

to be killed by Arjuna, it could not be said with reference to them that they would not survive even if Arjuna spared them. Apart from this, the Lord was quite justified in making the above assertion even with a view to encouraging

Arjuna. The Lord was thus trying as it were to impress on Arjuna's mind the fact that the warriors arrayed in the enemy's camp were as good as dead, and that their extermination would not entail much exertion on his part.

*Thus replying to Arjuna's query the Lord shows in the next two verses the all-round advantages of participation in the war and, encouraging Arjuna to fight, says:—*

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व जित्वा शत्रून् भुङ्क्स्व राज्यं समृद्धम् ।

मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ॥ ३३ ॥

तस्मात् therefore; त्वम् You; उत्तिष्ठ arise; यशः glory; लभस्व win; शत्रून् foes; जित्वा conquering; समृद्धम् the affluent kingdom; भुङ्क्स्व enjoy; एते all these (warriors); पूर्वम् एव even before; मया एव by Me alone; निहताः have been killed; सव्यसाचिन् O ambidextrous bowman, Arjuna; निमित्तमात्रम् a mere instrument; भव do you become.

Therefore, do you arise and win glory; conquering foes, enjoy the affluent kingdom. These warriors stand already slain by Me; be you only an instrument, Arjuna. ( 33 )

When it was a settled fact that all the warriors on the enemy's side must die at all events, no matter if Arjuna struck them or stayed his hand, active participation in the war was the only profitable course for him from every point of view. On no account should Arjuna desist from war under such circumstances, but should stand up enthusiastically and fight. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the words 'Tasmāt Uttiṣṭha'.

By asking Arjuna to win glory and, conquering foes, to enjoy the affluent kingdom the Lord is giving a clear indication to him that he was sure to attain victory over his enemies.

Arjuna could pull the bow-string as easily with the left as with his right hand. This had earned him the title of 'Savyasāchī'. Addressing him by this name, and asking him to be His

tool, the Lord seeks to convey that it was exceptionally easy for him to vanquish the heroes on the other side. Moreover, he would not be really required to kill his foes, since he had actually seen with his own eyes that they had all been already killed by the Lord. Arjuna would only enjoy the reputation of having vanquished and killed his enemies. Therefore, he should not entertain the least scruple about killing them.

There is one more idea underlying the Lord's advice to Arjuna to work as His tool. The Lord thereby seeks to impress on Arjuna's mind the fact that he would incur no sin by killing those warriors: for he was only serving as an instrument in killing them in a passage of arms that had devolved on him as a duty by virtue of his being a member of the warrior class. Far from incurring any sin, he would on the other hand

be performing his duty as a Kṣatriya. throw himself in the fight heart and Therefore, without entertaining any soul, shaking off egoism and the feeling misgiving on this point, he should of mineness.

द्रोणं च भीष्मं च जयद्रथं च कर्णं तथान्यानपि योधवीरान् ।

मया हतांस्त्वं जहि मा व्यथिष्ठा युध्यस्व जेतसि रणे सपत्नान् ॥ ३४ ॥

द्रोणम् Āchārya Droṇa; च and; भीष्मम् the patriarch Bhīṣma; च and; जयद्रथम् King Jayadratha; च and; कर्णम् the celebrated Karṇa; तथा even so; अन्यान् अपि even other; मया by Me; हतान् slain; योधवीरान् heroic warriors; त्वम् you; जहि kill; मा व्यथिष्ठा: fear not; रणे in the passage of arms; सपत्नान् the enemies; जेतसि you shall conquer; युध्यस्व (therefore) fight.

Do you kill Droṇa and Bhīṣma and Jayadratha and Karṇa and even other brave warriors, who stand already killed by Me; fear not. You will surely conquer the enemies in this war; therefore, fight. (34)

Āchārya Droṇa was a past master in archery and the use of other weapons of war, and was exceptionally proficient in the art of warfare. The tradition was that he could not be slain so long as he carried a weapon in his hand. Arjuna, therefore, looked upon him as invincible; moreover, since Droṇa had been his teacher, Arjuna considered it sinful to kill him. Bhīṣma too was a world-renowned warrior. He had discomfited even an invincible hero like Paraśurāma. Besides this, he had obtained a boon from his father Śantanu to the effect that Death itself would be powerless to

take his life against his will. All these facts had led Arjuna to believe that it was no easy task to conquer Bhīṣma. Moreover, he held it to be a sin to kill the great patriarch with his own hands. On more than one occasions he had expressed his inability to slay Bhīṣma.

Jayadratha\* was a great warrior himself, and being a great devotee of Bhagavān Śankara had obtained a rare boon from the latter, which had made him even more difficult to conquer. Having married Duryodhana's sister Duḥśalā, he stood in the relation of a

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\*Jayadratha was the son of the Ruler of Sind, Vṛddhakṣatra by name. He was married to Duḥśalā, the only daughter of King Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Once, during the exile of the Pāṇḍavas in the forest, he carried off Draupadī in their absence. When, on their return to the forest abode, Bhīma and his brothers heard about this abduction, they at once followed Jayadratha and freeing Draupadī from his clutches made him a captive. At Yudhiṣṭhira's intervention, however, he was allowed to go after having his head shaved as a mark of punishment. During the Kurukṣetra war, while Arjuna was engaged in a fight with the Samsaptakas, Jayadratha detained Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Nakula and Sahadeva at the entrance of the battle-array called Chakravayūha, thus forbidding their entry into the Vyūha and preventing them from bringing succour to Abhimanyu, who was consequently surrounded and killed by a number of warriors. Thereupon Arjuna took a vow that if he failed to kill Jayadratha before sunset the next day, he would end his life by entering a blazing fire. The warriors of the Kaurava army tried their utmost to save Jayadratha, but all their efforts failed due to a clever strategem adopted by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa; and Arjuna succeeded in severing Jayadratha's head from his trunk before the sun actually went down. Jayadratha was armoured with a boon to the effect that he who dropped his

*Using the word 'Sihāne' in the preceding verse, Arjuna showed the propriety of the Siddhas offering salutations etc. to the Lord. Establishing the same thing in the next four verses he now offers repeated salutations to the Lord.*

कस्माच्च ते न नमेरन्महात्मन् गरीयसे ब्रह्मणोऽप्यादिकर्त्रे ।

अनन्त देवेश जगन्निवास त्वमक्षरं सदसत्तत्परं यत् ॥ ३७ ॥

महात्मन् O great soul; ब्रह्मणः अपि of Brahmā himself; आदिकर्त्रे to the first progenitor; च and; गरीयसे to the greatest of the great; ते they; कस्मात् wherefore; न नमेरन् should not bow; अनन्त O infinite being; देवेश O lord of celestials; जगन्निवास O abode of the universe; यत् which; सत् (is) existent; असत् non-existent; तत्परम् (and) beyond both; अक्षरम् the Indestructible (Brahma); त्वम् You (are).

O great soul, why should they not bow to You, who are the progenitor of Brahmā himself and the greatest of the great? O infinite Lord of celestials, Abode of the universe, You are that which is existent (Sat), that which is non-existent (Asat) and also that which is beyond both, viz., the indestructible Brahma. (37)

By addressing the Lord as 'Mahātman', 'Ananta', 'Deveśa' and 'Jagannivāsa', Arjuna shows that He is the all-pervading soul of all animate and inanimate beings; that His form, virtues and glory etc. are all infinite; that He is the Ruler even of the celestials and that the universe not only exists in Him but is also pervaded by Him. Therefore, it is quite in the fitness of things that all beings should offer their salutations to Him.

The adjectives 'Gariyase' and 'Brahma-nopyādikartre' indicate that He is the progenitor not only of this universe but of Brahmā himself, who created it. Therefore, being the best of all, and the

supreme object of their worship, He deserves the homage of all.

The imperishable soul, which never ceases to be, is designated as 'Sat'; while all perishable and transient objects are termed as 'Asat'. It is these which have been referred to as the 'Parā' and 'Aparā' Prakṛtis in Chapter VII and as the 'Akṣara' and 'Kṣara' Puruṣas respectively in Chapter XV. Beyond these two is the supreme Indestructible or God Himself, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. In justification of his offering salutations etc. to the Lord, Arjuna says that they are all identical with the Lord.

त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराणस्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।

वेत्तासि वेद्यं च परं च धाम, त्वया तत् विश्वमनन्तरूप ॥ ३८ ॥

त्वम् You; आदिदेवः (are) the primal deity; पुराणः पुरुषः the most ancient Person; त्वम् You; अस्य विश्वस्य of this universe; परम् निधानम् the ultimate resort;



च and; वेत्ता the knower; वेद्यम् the knowable; च and; परम् धाम the supreme Abode; असि are; अनन्तरूप assuming endless forms; त्वया by You; विश्वम् the (entire) universe; ततम् (stands) pervaded.

You are the primal Deity, the most ancient Person; You are the ultimate resort of this universe. You are both the knower and the knowable, and the highest abode. It is You who pervade the universe, assuming endless forms. (38)

By speaking of the Lord as "the ultimate resort of this universe" Arjuna shows that at the time of final dissolution the whole of this universe gets merged into God and ever exists in a fraction of His being.

By referring to the Lord as 'Vettā' (knower), Arjuna indicates that it is He who possesses real and full knowledge of the past, present and future worlds, and is the eternal witness of all. That is why God is omniscient; and there is none who can equal Him in omniscience.

By speaking of the Lord as 'Vedyam', Arjuna indicates that He is the supreme Brahma or God, who is the only object worth knowing, whose knowledge is the highest goal of human existence, and who has been referred to in verses 12 to 17 of Chapter XIII as the object of Knowledge.

By referring to the Lord as 'Param Dhāma' Arjuna shows His identity with the highest abode, which is the final resort of all liberated souls, and attaining which man does not return to the mortal world.

वायुर्यमोऽग्निर्वरुणः शशाङ्कः प्रजापतिस्त्वं प्रपितामहश्च ।

नमो नमस्तेऽस्तु सहस्रकृत्वः पुनश्च भूयोऽपि नमो नमस्ते ॥ ३९ ॥

त्वम् You (are); वायुः Vāyu (the wind-god); यमः Yama (the god of death); अग्निः Agni (the god of fire); वरुणः Varuṇa (the god of water); शशाङ्कः the moon-god; प्रजापतिः the lord of creation, Brahmā; च and; प्रपितामहः the father even of Brahmā (the grandfather); ते to You; सहस्रकृत्वः a thousand times; नमः obeisance; नमः (further) obeisance; अस्तु let there be; ते to You; भूयः अपि once more; पुनः च repeatedly; नमः obeisance; नमः (further) obeisance.

You are Vāyu (the wind-god), Yama (the god of death), Agni (the god of fire), the moon-god, Brahmā (the lord of Creation), nay, the father of Brahmā himself. Hail, hail to You a thousand times; salutations, repeated salutations to You once again. (39)

By identifying the Lord with Vāyu, alone is worthy of receiving salutations Yama and other gods Arjuna indicates from all in every respect. that in addition to the gods mentioned above all other gods who are worthy of salutation are comprised in God, being fractions of His being. Therefore, He

Being the father of Kaśyapa, Dakṣa- Prajāpati and the seven sages etc., who actually created the whole universe

Brahmā is the grandfather of all beings; 'Namaḥ' with the adverbial compound and the creator of Brahmā is God Himself. 'Sahasrakṛtvah' by Arjuna shows that, Therefore, He is the great-grandfather of all. From this point of view also, He is worthy of receiving salutations from all. actuated as he was by the feeling of deep reverence for the Lord mixed with fear, he did not feel tired of bowing to Him,

The repeated use of the indeclinable and wanted to go on with his salutations.

नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते नमोऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व ।

अनन्तवीर्यामितविक्रमस्त्वं सर्वं समाप्नोषि ततोऽसि सर्वः ॥ ४० ॥

अनन्तवीर्यं O Lord possessing infinite prowess; ते to You; पुरस्ताद् from before; अथ as well as; पृष्ठतः from behind; नमः obeisance; सर्वं O soul of all; ते to You; सर्वतः from all sides; एव indeed; नमः obeisance; अस्तु let there be; अमितविक्रमः possessing limitless might; त्वम् You; सर्वम् the whole ( universe ); समाप्नोषि pervade; ततः therefore; सर्वः all; असि You are.

O Lord of infinite prowess, my salutations to You from before and from behind. O soul of all, my obeisance to You from all sides indeed. You, who possess limitless might, pervade all; therefore, You are all. ( 40 )

By addressing the Lord as 'Sarva', the conception of any mortal.

Arjuna seeks to convey that He is the soul of all, pervades all and is identical with all; no atom of space is devoid of Him. Therefore, it is but natural for Arjuna to offer his salutations from all sides to Him who is present everywhere.

In the first half of this verse Arjuna has already addressed the Lord as 'Sarva'. In the latter half he establishes His universal character. There is no iota of space where He is not; there is no particle of matter which is not permeated by Him. Therefore, He is all in all. Apart from God the world had no reality whatsoever in the eyes of Arjuna.

By referring to the Lord as 'Amitavikramah', Arjuna shows that the strength He is capable of exerting is beyond

*Offering praises and salutations to the Lord in the above manner, Arjuna now craves in the following two verses His forgiveness for the offences committed by him through word and deed due to lack of true knowledge about His virtues, mysteries and glory.*

सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यदुक्तं हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति ।

अज्ञानता महिमानं तवेदं मया प्रमादात्प्रणयेन वापि ॥ ४१ ॥

यच्चावहासार्थमसत्कृतोऽसि विहारशय्यासनभोजनेषु ।

एकोऽथवाप्यच्युत तत्समक्षं तत्क्षामये त्वामहमप्रमेयम् ॥ ४२ ॥

तव Your; इदम् this; महिमानम् greatness; अज्ञानता not knowing; सखा ( You are my ) friend; इति thus; मत्वा thinking; प्रणयेन through affection; वा or;

प्रमादात् through negligence; अपि even; मया by me; हे कृष्ण Ho Kṛṣṇa; हे यादव Ho descendant of Yadu; हे सखे Ho comrade; इति thus; यत् whatever; प्रसभम् importunately; उक्तम् has been said; च and; अच्युत O sinless one; यत् the way in which; अवहासार्थम् for the sake of fun; विहारशय्यासनभोजनेषु while at play, reposing, sitting or at meals; एकः alone; अथवा or; तत्समक्षम् in the presence of those (companions); अपि even; असत्कृतः असि You have been slighted (by me); तत् for all that (misdemeanour); अप्रमेयम् त्वाम् from You who are infinite; अहम् I; क्षामये seek forgiveness.

The way in which I have importunately called out, either through intimacy or even through want of thought, "Ho Kṛṣṇa! Ho Yādava! Ho Comrade!" and so on, suspecting not this greatness of Yours, and thinking You only to be a friend, and the way in which You have been slighted by me in jest, O sinless one, while at play, reposing, sitting or at meals, either alone or even in the presence of others—for all that I crave forgiveness from You, who are infinite. (41, 42)

The word 'Mahimānam', qualified by the demonstrative adjective 'Idam', refers to the incomparable and boundless glory, greatness, excellence and potency of the Lord, which Arjuna actually saw during his vision of the Cosmic Body.

The participial adjective 'Ajānatā' qualifying the pronoun 'Mayā' is intended as an excuse for the impropriety of behaviour shown by Arjuna towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna thereby claimed that the offences unwittingly committed by him would be forgiven by the Lord.

It was due to his ignorance about the Lord's incomparable and infinite glory that he had treated Him as an equal; and it was therefore that he never paid any regard, during his conversations with the Lord, to His exalted position as the object of universal adoration. This undoubtedly constituted a serious blunder on his part. He treated as an equal one whose feet even the greatest of gods and sages deemed it a privilege to adore! This is what is sought to be conveyed by the words 'Sakheti Matvā' and 'Pramādāt'.

The familiar forms of address used by Arjuna in respect of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are quoted by him as an instance of the irreverence shown by him towards the latter. Although there was no comparison between him and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who was no other than God Himself, he went on foolishly regarding Him as an ordinary friend, and instead of using terms of respect for Him continued to address Him by name in a familiar way. This is what he now repents for.

The word 'Achyuta' stands for one who never falls from his glory and exalted state of being. Addressing the Lord by this name Arjuna indicates that, even though he committed a great offence by insulting Him through his unseemly behaviour, such impropriety of behaviour on his part could not really harm Him in any way. Nothing in the world could shake His position and nobody could ever bring dishonour to Him; for He is always 'Achyuta' or unshaken.

Over and above the instances of impropriety cited in verse 41, Arjuna proceeds in the next verse to mention

other forms of objectionable conduct on his part. The indeclinable 'Yat' has been repeated in the very beginning of verse 42 to introduce these other forms of misdemeanour, and the conjunction 'Cha' is intended to conjoin them with those mentioned in the preceding verse.

Intimacy, thoughtlessness and fun—these are the three factors responsible for lack of regard on the part of an individual for another's honour or dishonour. Intimacy knows no decorum; thoughtlessness naturally contributes to lapses; and it becomes difficult to maintain propriety of speech when one is in a jocular mood. For the disrespect shown to a man worthy of reverence, these three factors may be jointly or individually responsible. Of these three factors, intimacy and thoughtlessness have already been dealt with in the preceding verse; while the present verse points to the third factor, viz., fun, by using the adverbial compound 'Avahāṣārtham' (for the sake of fun).

A similar expression of regret is attributed to Arjuna in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* as well, where he says:—

"While reposing, sitting, walking, indulging in tall talk or dining with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, I had developed such intimacy with Him that occasionally I used to taunt Him

saying "O friend, you are indeed a truthful man." But that noble soul out of His inherent greatness overlooked all those faults of mine even as a friend overlooks the faults of his friend, or a father condones the faults of his son."\* (I. xv. 19)

The demonstrative pronoun 'Tat' sums up all the offences of the kind mentioned in verses 41 and 42. And by speaking of the Lord as 'Aprameyam', Arjuna indicates the inconceivable nature of His form and glory. In fact, no one can apprehend Him is possessed by anyone is wholly attributable to His grace. It was due to His supreme grace that Arjuna, who had been ignorant of His greatness so long and consequently behaved disrespectfully towards Him, had come to realize His glory to a certain extent. Even then it could not be asserted that he had known it fully. Far from knowing it fully he had not yet apprehended even that much of His glory which the divine grace sought to bring home to him. But what little he had understood had fully convinced him that He was God almighty Himself. He had now come to realize that the way in which he had behaved with the Lord, treating Him as his equal, was unseemly on his part, and he humbly sought His pardon for all his past misbehaviour.

*Having thus craved the indulgence of the Lord, Arjuna proceeds to describe His glory in the next two verses, establishing thereby His capacity to forgive him, and invokes His favour once more.*

पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुर्गरीयान् ।

न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यो लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभाव ॥ ४३ ॥

त्वम् You; अस्य चराचरस्य लोकस्य of this moving and unmoving creation; पिता the father; गरीयान् गुरुः the greatest teacher; च and; पूज्यः worthy of adoration; असि are; अप्रतिमप्रभाव O Lord of incomparable might; लोकत्रये in (all) the three worlds; त्वत्समः Your equal; अपि even; अन्यः another; न not; अस्ति there is; अभ्यधिकः any better; कुतः how (then).

\* शय्यासनानदन्विकथनमोजनादिभ्यैक्याद् वयस्य ऋतवानिति विप्रलब्धः ।

सख्युः सखेव पितृवत्तनयस्य सर्वं सेहे महान् महितया कुमतेरधं मे ॥

You are the Father, nay, the greatest teacher of this moving and unmoving creation, and worthy of adoration. O Lord of incomparable might, in all the three worlds there is none else even equal to You; how, then, any better ? ( 43 )

• By speaking of the Lord as "the Father of this creation, the greatest teacher and worthy of adoration", Arjuna seeks to justify his claim for forgiveness. The whole of this universe has sprung from the Lord; therefore, He is its Father. Of all great gods, sages and other powerful beings Brahmā is the greatest; for he is the first-born of this creation, and it is he who teaches all according to their respective capacity through the eternal light of God. But Brahmā himself takes his descent from God and it is from Him again that he derives his wisdom. Therefore, He is the greatest of all beings, greater than the greatest, and the only and the great teacher of all. Even gods like Brahmā and sages like Vasiṣṭha, who are objects of supreme adoration and ever worthy of salutation even for the gods and sages that are

worshipped by the world, deem it a proud privilege to obtain even a moment's opportunity to offer direct worship or praises to Him. Therefore, He is the supreme object of worship even for all adorable beings, and it is quite natural for Arjuna to expect that He should condone his faults.

By the second half of this verse Arjuna shows that in the whole universe there is none who can even approach the infinite and inconceivable virtues, glory and greatness of God. God alone is His own compeer. And when there is none equal to Him, the possibility of anyone surpassing Him cannot even be conceived. If, therefore, the Lord, who was all compassion, did not forgive his faults, there could be no hope of his being pardoned by anyone else.

तस्मात्प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय कायं प्रसादये त्वामहमीशमीड्यम् ।

पितेव पुत्रस्य सखेव सख्युः प्रियः प्रियायार्हसि देव सोढुम् ॥ ४४ ॥

तस्मात् therefore; अहम् I; कायम् (my) body; प्रणिधाय prostrating (at Your feet); प्रणम्य bowing (to You); ईड्यम् worthy of praise; त्वाम् ईशम् You, the Ruler of all; प्रसादये seek to propitiate; देव O Lord; पिता a father; पुत्रस्य with (his) son; इव as; सखा a friend; सख्युः with (his) friend; इव as; प्रियः a husband; प्रियायाः (as) with (his) beloved spouse; सोढुम् to bear; अर्हसि You ought.

Therefore, Lord, prostrating my body at Your feet and bowing low I seek to propitiate You, the ruler of all and worthy of all praise. It behoves You to bear with me even as a father bears with his son, a friend with his friend and a husband with his beloved spouse. ( 44 )

The word 'Tasmāt' refers to the incomparable greatness and glory possessed by the Lord, mentioned in the preceding verse, which render Him incumbent on Him to take pity on, and be favourably disposed towards, a distressed

soul like Arjuna, who had taken shelter under Him. That is why Arjuna took courage to seek His forgiveness with all humility.

By referring to the Lord as 'Īśam' and 'Īdyam' Arjuna seeks to convey that He is the sole and supreme Ruler of all, who not only regulates the whole universe but is the ruler and controller even of gods like Indra (the lord of paradise), Āditya (the sun-god), Varuṇa (the god of water), Kubera (the god of riches) and Yama (the god of death), who are the guardians of the world. And the extent of His virtues, glory and greatness is so vast that even if the whole universe goes on singing His praises for ever their limit cannot be reached. Hence He alone is worthy of praise. Arjuna felt that he had neither adequate knowledge nor the requisite eloquence whereby he could sing His praises and win His favour. He felt utterly incompetent to praise Him. He thought whatever words he would utter in praise of His glory would fail to touch even the fringe of that glory, and

would thus detract from the same. Hence the only course left to him was to throw himself at His feet like a log of wood, i. e., bow to Him with all his limbs, and seek His favour through the grace of the dust of His feet. That is how Arjuna invoked His favour and asked Him to overlook his faults.

It has already been shown in verses 41 and 42 above that thoughtlessness, intimacy and fun are the three factors which jointly or severally contribute to an offence of slight. By citing the examples of father and son, friend and friend, and husband and wife, Arjuna requests the Lord to condone all his lapses attributable to any of the three causes mentioned above. That is to say, just as a father forgives the fault of his son committed out of ignorance and thoughtlessness, a friend puts up with the indignities heaped on him by his friend in a spirit of fun, and a husband condones the lapses of his wife occasioned by intimacy, Arjuna expects the Lord to forgive all his faults proceeding from the three causes mentioned above.

*Craving the indulgence of the Lord for his trespasses in this way, Arjuna requests Him in the next two verses to reveal His four-armed form.*

अदृष्टपूर्वं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे ।

तदेव मे दर्शय देवरूपं प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥ ४५ ॥

अदृष्टपूर्वम् ( Your wondrous form ) never seen before; दृष्ट्वा seeing; हृषितः delighted; अस्मि I am; च and; मे my; मनः mind; भयेन by fear; प्रव्यथितम् is tormented; तत् that; देवरूपम् four-armed divine form ( of Viṣṇu ); एव only; मे to me; दर्शय ( pray ) reveal; देवेश O Lord of celestials; जगन्निवास O Abode of the universe; प्रसीद be gracious.

Having seen Your wondrous form, which was never seen before, I feel transported with joy; at the same time my mind is tormented by fear. Pray reveal to me that divine form, the form of Viṣṇu with four arms; O Lord of celestials, Abode of the universe, be gracious. ( 45 )

By the first half of this verse Arjuna and fear aroused in him by the sight of points to the alternate feelings of joy that wondrous form. When he looked

to the virtues, glory and greatness of the Lord as revealed in His Cosmic Body, his joy knew no bounds and he congratulated himself on the infinite compassion and unparalleled love shown to him by the Lord in revealing His transcendent form. But the very next moment, when he became conscious of the dreadfulness of that form, he trembled with fear, and felt much perturbed.

The above statement of Arjuna is significant. He thereby humbly requests the Lord to withdraw that form from before his eyes as speedily as possible.

The demonstrative adjective 'Tat' points to something out of sight. It further denotes that which has been seen before, but is now out of sight. And the use of the indeclinable 'Eva' has a restrictive force. The compound word 'Devarūpam', qualified by 'Tat',

therefore, refers to the four-armed divine form of Viṣṇu residing in Vaikuṇṭha. If the word 'Tat' alone occurred in the verse, it could be interpreted as referring to the human garb in which the Lord appeared before Arjuna. But the word 'Deva' joined to 'Rūpam' makes it clear that the form referred to here was other than human *i. e.*, belonging to the heaven world.

By addressing the Lord as 'Deveśa' and 'Jagannivāsa' Arjuna shows that He was none else than the all-pervading Lord of the universe. Hence He alone could reveal that divine Form to him.

By asking the Lord to be gracious, Arjuna solicits Him to withdraw speedily the dreadful Cosmic Form and be pleased to reveal before him the four-armed divine form.

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रहस्तमिच्छामि त्वां द्रष्टुमहं तथैव ।

तेनैव रूपेण चतुर्भुजेन सहस्रबाहो भव विश्वमूर्ते ॥ ४६ ॥

अहम् I; तथा एव even so; त्वाम् You; किरीटिनम् adorned with a diadem; गदिनम् armed with a club; चक्रहस्तम् ( and ) holding a discus in one of Your hands; द्रष्टुम् to see; इच्छामि desire; विश्वमूर्ते O Universal Being; सहस्रबाहो O Lord with a thousand arms; तेन चतुर्भुजेन रूपेण in that four-armed form; एव alone; भव do You appear.

I wish to see You adorned in the same way with a diadem on the head, and holding a mace and a discus in two of Your hands. O Lord with a thousand arms, O Universal Being, appear again in the same four-armed Form.

( 46 )

The Lord had taken a vow not to take up arms during the Mahābhārata war, and He was seated in Arjuna's chariot holding a whip in one hand and the reins in another. But, before seeing Him in the two-armed human form once more, Arjuna wanted to behold His four-armed divine form holding weapons of war like the mace and the discus. This

is what he seeks to convey by the use of the indeclinables 'Tathā' and 'Eva'.

The word 'Rūpeṇa', qualified by the demonstrative adjective 'Tena', refers to the four-armed divine form mentioned in the preceding verse by the words 'Tat Rūpam'. The use of the indeclinable 'Eva' in this verse indicates that even

though Arjuna was generally wont to see the two-armed human form of the Lord, he now longed to see the four-armed divine form alone.

The four-armed form, referred to in this verse, means the divine form of Viṣṇu. The following are our reasons for holding this view:—

(1) If the four-armed form were the natural form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it was needless to speak of It as holding a mace and a discus in two of Its hands; for Arjuna used constantly to see that form. Nay, even the use of the word 'Chaturbhujena' with reference to it would have been redundant. It would have been quite enough for Arjuna to request the Lord to reveal the form which had been before him only a few minutes back.

(2) The word 'Devarūpam' (divine form), occurring in the preceding verse, bears a contrast with the word 'Mānuṣam Rūpam' (human form) used in verse 51 below. This further proves that the word 'Devarūpam' refers to Viṣṇu.

(3) The use of the indeclinable 'Bhūyah' with the words 'Swakam Rūpam' in verse 50 below and that of 'Punaḥ' with 'Saumyavapuḥ' also proves that the Lord first revealed His four-armed divine form, and thereafter His two-armed human form.

(4) The use of the adjective 'Sudurdarśam' in verse 52 below shows that the form under question was something exceptionally rare; and the same verse further adds that even gods were always eager to behold that Form. If the four-armed form were natural to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it would have been open to the perception

even of human beings; why should the gods, in that case, be ever eager to see that Form? If, on the other hand, it is urged that the words 'Idam Rūpam' occurring in verse 50 below refer to the Cosmic Body, such a terrible form was even beyond the conception of gods. Thus it is clear that it is the form of Viṣṇu residing in Vaikuṇṭha that the gods are ever eager to behold.

(5) The Cosmic Body has been glorified in verse 48 below, beginning with the words 'Na Vedayajñādhyayanaiḥ' (I cannot be perceived through the study of Vedas or rituals etc.). The same idea has been repeated in verse 53, beginning with 'Nāham Vedairna Tapasā' (Neither through study of the Vedas nor through penance etc. can I be seen in this Form). Construing both these verses as glorifying the Cosmic Body would expose the Lord to the charge of tautology. This as well proves that before revealing the human form the Lord appeared before Arjuna in the four-armed divine form, and that verse 53 was uttered in praise of the same.

(6) In verse 24 of this chapter, and again in verse 30, Arjuna addresses the Lord as 'Viṣṇu'. This also indicates Arjuna's longing to see the Lord in the form of Viṣṇu.

All these arguments go to prove that Arjuna solicits the Lord in the present verse to show him the four-armed form of Viṣṇu.

By addressing the Lord as 'Sahasra-bāho' (possessed of a thousand arms) and 'Viśwamūrte' (Universal Being), Arjuna requests Him to withdraw His Universal Form.

*Revealing in the next two verses the glory of His Cosmic Body and the rarity of its perception, the Lord consoles Arjuna in verse 49 and invites him to behold the four-armed form as requested above.*

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मया प्रसन्नेन तवार्जुनेदं रूपं परं दर्शितमात्मयोगात् ।

तेजोमयं विश्वमनन्तमाद्यं यन्मे त्वदन्येन न दृष्टपूर्वम् ॥ ४७ ॥



अर्जुन O Arjuna; प्रसन्नेन pleased (with you); मया by Me; आत्मयोगात् through My own power of Yoga; इदम् this; मे Mine; परम् supreme; तेजोमयम् effulgent; आद्यम् primal; अनन्तम् (and) infinite; विश्वम् रूपम् Cosmic Body; त्व to you; दर्शितम् has been shown; यत् which; त्वदन्येन by anyone else than you; न दृष्टपूर्वम् was never seen before.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Arjuna! pleased with you I have shown you, through My own power of Yoga, this supreme, effulgent, primal and infinite Cosmic Body, which was never seen before by anyone else than you. (47)

The use of the adjective 'Prasannena' with 'Mayā' shows that the devotion Arjuna bore towards the Lord and the fervent prayer that he addressed to Him in verses 3 and 4 above had moved His heart, and it was with a view to enlightening him about His own virtues, glory and truth that He had mercifully shown His transcendent form to him. Under such circumstances, Arjuna had no cause for fear, agony or bewilderment. The Lord, therefore, wondered why he should be so much perturbed with fear.

The compound word 'Ātmayogāt' denotes that the Cosmic Body of the Lord could not be perceived by all and at all times. It could be seen only when He vouchsafed its vision through His own power of Yoga, and by him alone who is gifted with the divine eye, and by none else. Thus it was a great privilege to obtain a vision of that form.

The use of the adjectives 'Idam', 'Param', 'Tejomayam', 'Ādyam', 'Anantam' and 'Viśvam' with the substantive 'Rūpam' is intended to bring home to

Arjuna the greatness of His transcendent and wonderful Cosmic Body. The Lord thus told Arjuna that the form in which He appeared before him was most excellent and divine in character; it was an infinite mass of divine lustre, the beginning and creator of all, and boundless in extent; its limit could not be found anywhere. What Arjuna saw was not a complete picture. It was only a fragment of that great Form.

There was a world of difference between the Cosmic forms revealed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to mother Yaśodā in His own mouth and to Bhīṣma and others in the court of the Kauravas, on the one hand, and the Cosmic Body revealed on this occasion to Arjuna, on the other. All these three forms have been described differently in our sacred books. In the form revealed to Arjuna Bhīṣma, Droṇa and the other heroes were seen entering the flaming mouths of the Lord. Such a Cosmic form was never shown by the Lord to anyone before. Thus there is no incongruity in the above statement of the Lord.

न वेदयज्ञाध्ययनैर् दानैर् च क्रियामिर्न तपोभिर्ह्रैः ।

एवंरूपः शक्य अहं नृलोके द्रष्टुं त्वदन्येन कुरुप्रवीर ॥ ४८ ॥

कुरुप्रवीर O great hero of the Kuru race; नृलोके in (this) world of human beings; एवंरूपः assuming such a (cosmic) form; अहम् I; न neither; वेदयज्ञाध्ययनैः through study of the Vedas or of rituals; न nor; दानैः through gifts; न nor again; क्रियाभिः through actions (enjoined by the Śāstras); च and;

न नो; उग्रैः तपोभिः through austere penances; त्वदन्येन by anyone else than you; द्रष्टुम् शक्यः am capable of being seen.

Arjuna, in this mortal world I cannot be seen in this Form by anyone else than you, either through study of the Vedas or of rituals, or again through gifts, actions or austere penances. (48)

Study of the Vedas with all the supplementary sciences and other auxiliary branches of Knowledge under a qualified teacher well-versed in the Vedic lore, and thoroughly grasping their meaning is called 'Vedādhyaṇa'. Even so receiving instruction in the various rituals from teachers skilled in the performance of sacrifices, and acquiring practical knowledge of the same by attending sacrifices performed with due ceremony under the supervision of such teachers is known as 'Yajñādhyaṇa'.

'Dāna' consists in gifting to another, with due regard to the latter's qualifications, one's wealth or other possessions, food, water, knowledge, cattle, land etc. with a cheerful heart for the recipient's benefit and enjoyment.

Performing sacrifices enjoined by the Vedas and Smṛti texts, and all other pursuits sanctioned by the scriptures and followed for the sake of discharging one's duty as prescribed by one's Varna or grade in society and Āśrama or stage in life are covered by the term 'Kriyā'.

Observing fasts recommended in the Śāstras under the name of 'Kṛtchhra' and 'Chāndrāyana' etc., and other stringent rules of life, subduing the mind and senses with strong determination and reason, undergoing severe bodily and mental suffering for the sake of one's duty, and various other forms of askesis undertaken in accordance with the scriptural ordi-

nance—all these are included under the category of 'austere penances'.

Declaring that it was impossible to obtain a vision of His Cosmic Body through the above practices, and thereby revealing its transcendent glory the Lord congratulates Arjuna on his being able, through His own grace and goodwill, to behold the Form which could not be seen by any other means. The feelings of fear, agony and bewilderment etc. obsessing Arjuna's mind at that moment were, therefore, altogether inopportune and unjustified.

Man alone is qualified to study the Vedas and rituals, practise charity, perform penance and undertake various other forms of activities. And it is through the human body alone that one acquires various other qualifications by performing fresh actions of various kinds. The other worlds of the universe are primarily places where one works out one's destiny. The use of the word 'Nṛloke' is intended to bring out this glory of the mortal world. The intention is to point out that when that Form of the Lord cannot be seen by anybody through such practices even in this world, much less can it be seen in the other worlds without such practices.

By addressing Arjuna as 'Kurupravira' the Lord shows that Arjuna was the greatest hero of the Kuru race, and it was unbecoming of a hero like him to be overcome with fear. This was another reason why he should not give way to fear.

मा ते व्यथा मा च विमूढभावो दृष्ट्वा रूपं घोरमीदृङ्गमेदम् ।

व्यपेतभीः प्रीतमनाः पुनस्त्वं तदेव मे रूपमिदं प्रपश्य ॥ ४९ ॥

मम Mine; ईदृक् such as this; इदम् this; घोरम् terrible; रूपम् form; दृष्ट्वा seeing; ते to you; व्यथा perturbation; मा let there not be; च and; विमूढभावः perplexity (too); मा there should not be; त्वम् you; व्यपेतभीः freed from fear; प्रीतमनाः (and) delighted at heart; तत् एव that very; मे Mine; इदम् this (four-armed); रूपम् form; पुनः again; प्रपश्य behold.

Seeing such a dreadful Form of Mine as this, be not perturbed or perplexed; with a fearless and complacent mind, behold once again the same four-armed Form of Mine (bearing the conch, discus, mace and lotus). (49)

By the first half of this verse the Lord indicates that the sight of the Cosmic Body, which was so difficult to obtain, and which had been vouchsafed to Arjuna as a mark of His pleasure, should not have caused perplexity and perturbation to Arjuna. Nevertheless, when that dreadful vision was proving a source of fear and bewilderment to him, and he desired that He should withdraw that form from before his eyes, the Lord was willing to meet his wishes in the matter and conceal the terrible form just for his consolation. Arjuna need not, therefore, feel perturbed or perplexed any more.

The use of the demonstrative adjectives 'Tat' and 'Idam' with the substantive 'Rūpam' is intended to show that Arjuna had now before his eyes and could very well see the four-armed divine form which had been shown to him before, and for a vision of which he was now praying to the Lord. In other words, the Cosmic Body had disappeared from his view and had been replaced by the four-armed divine form. The Lord, therefore, invited Arjuna to drive out fear from his mind and behold His four-armed form with a complacent mind.

When the Lord was thus going to withdraw the form which caused fear and bewilderment to Arjuna, and reveal the four-armed form coveted by him, he should shake off all fear and cheer up. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the adjectives 'Vyapetabhīḥ' and 'Pritamanāḥ'.

The word 'Punaḥ' used in the verse conveys the impression that the Lord had revealed His four-armed form to Arjuna on a previous occasion as well. The use of the words 'Tat Eva' and 'Tena Eva' occurring in his prayer contained in verses 45 and 46 above go to confirm this view.

*Saṅjaya now tells Dhṛtarāṣṭra what Śrī Kṛṣṇa did after inviting Arjuna to behold His four-armed Form.*

संजय उवाच

इत्यर्जुनं वासुदेवस्तथोक्त्वा स्वकं रूपं दर्शयामास भूयः ।

आश्वासयामास च भीतमेनं भूत्वा पुनः सौम्यवपुर्महात्मा ॥ ५० ॥

वासुदेवः Śrī Kṛṣṇa (son of Vasudeva); अर्जुनम् to Arjuna; इति thus; उक्त्वा having spoken; भूयः again; तथा in the same way; स्वकम् रूपम् His own (four-armed) form; दर्शयामास revealed; च and; पुनः once more; महात्मा the high-souled Śrī Kṛṣṇa; सौम्यवपुः भूत्वा assuming a gentle form; भीतम् एनम् the frightened Arjuna; आश्वासयामास brought relief to.

Saṅjaya said: Having spoken thus to Arjuna, Bhagavān Vāsudeva again showed to him in the same way His own four-armed Form; and then, assuming a gentle form, the high-souled Śrī Kṛṣṇa consoled the frightened Arjuna. ( 50 )

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifested Himself in this world as a son of Vasudeva, and He resides in the heart of all beings as their very self. Therefore, He bears the title of Vāsudeva as one of His many appellations.

'Swakam Rūpam' means one's own form. Speaking in a wider sense, even the Cosmic Body belonged to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself and was thus His own body; even so the human garb in which He was ever present before all was equally His. But the use of the adjective 'Swakam' with 'Rūpam' must have been intended to refer to a third form, different from the two forms mentioned above. For the Cosmic Body was already present before Arjuna; and since he was feeling perturbed at the sight of that form, its revelation before him was altogether out of question at that moment. And with regard to the human form it was unnecessary to say that the Lord manifested it ( Darśayāmāsa ). For once the Cosmic Body was withdrawn from his view, the Lord's natural form

as a human being would have automatically appeared before Arjuna. There could be no question of showing it; for Arjuna would have himself seen that form. The use of the adjective 'Swakam' with 'Rūpam', and of the verb 'Darśayāmāsa', therefore, conveys the impression that it was the Lord's divine four-armed form eternally residing in Vaikunṭha, as distinguished from the human form which was present before all and had been manifested for the sake of carrying on His human sports, as well as from the Cosmic Body manifested through His power of Yoga, which Arjuna longed to see and which the Lord now revealed to him.

He whose self or personality is great is called a Mahātmā. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the soul of all beings, hence He is spoken of as a Mahātmā. The word 'Saumyavapuḥ' refers to the most pleasing and placid human form, the swarthy form in which Śrī Kṛṣṇa always appeared before all.

*When Śrī Kṛṣṇa, having withdrawn His Cosmic Body and revealed His four-armed form, finally assumed His natural human form and soothed Arjuna, the latter returned to his normal self and said:—*

अर्जुन उवाच

दृष्ट्वेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जनार्दन ।

इदानीमस्मि संवृत्तः सचेताः प्रकृतिं गतः ॥ ५१ ॥

जनार्दन O Kṛṣṇa; तव Yours; इदम् this; सौम्यम् placid; मानुषम् रूपम् human form; दृष्ट्वा seeing; इदानीम् now; सचेताः composed; संवृत्तः ( I have ) become; प्रकृतिम् to ( my ) normal self; गतः अस्मि I have returned.

Arjuna said: Kṛṣṇa, seeing this gentle human form of Yours I have regained my composure and am myself again. ( 51 )

The Lord's human form was exceptionally lovely, attractive and gentle; and the 'gentle form' mentioned in the preceding verse also referred to His human form. It was with the intention of bringing out this idea that the adjectives 'Saumyam' and 'Mānuṣam' have been used with the substantive 'Rūpam' in the present verse.

The sight of the Lord's Cosmic Body had aroused in the mind of Arjuna

morbid feelings like fear, agony and bewilderment etc. The use of the phrases 'Sachetāḥ Samvṛttaḥ' and 'Prakṛtim Gataḥ' indicates the disappearance of those feelings. The intention is to show that the sight of the enchanting and lovely human form had restored his mental equilibrium. And morbidities like fear, excitement and shivering etc., which had taken possession of his mind, senses and body respectively, having now left him, he had recovered his normal state.

*Hearing the above words of Arjuna the Lord now reveals in two verses the rarity of vision and glory of His four-armed divine form.*

श्रीभगवानुवाच

सुदुर्दर्शमिदं रूपं दृष्टवानसि यन्मम ।

देवा अप्यस्य रूपस्य नित्यं दर्शनकाङ्क्षिणः ॥ ५२ ॥

मम Mine; यत् which; रूपम् ( four-armed ) form; दृष्टवान् असि you have ( just ) seen; इदम् that; सुदुर्दर्शम् ( is ) most difficult to perceive; देवाः gods; अपि even; नित्यम् ever; अस्य रूपस्य of this form; दर्शनकाङ्क्षिणः ( are ) eager to behold.

Śrī Bhagavān said: This form of Mine ( with four arms ) which you have just seen is exceedingly difficult to perceive. Even the gods are always eager to behold this form. ( 52 )

The demonstrative adjective 'Idam' points to an object near at hand; hence in the present context it refers to the four-armed form manifested after the disappearance of the Cosmic Body. By speaking of it as most difficult to perceive, the Lord seeks to convey that the eternal four-armed form existing beyond Māyā and adorned with divine attributes, which Arjuna saw only a few minutes back,

could be perceived only by one who is exclusively devoted to the Lord and on whom the divine grace fully shines.

The use of the indeclinable 'Api' after 'Devāḥ' is intended to convey that when gods themselves are always yearning to behold that form, and yet all of them are unable to see it, it is much more difficult for ordinary human beings to perceive it.

नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया ।

शक्य एवंविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा ॥ ५३ ॥

यथा as; माम् Me; दृष्टवान् असि you have seen; एवंविधः endowed with such a form; अहम् I; न neither; वेदैः by the Vedas; न nor; तपसा by

penance; न nor (again); दानेन by charity; च and; न nor (even); इज्या by ritual; द्रष्टुम् शक्यः (am) capable of being seen.

Neither by study of the Vedas nor by penance, nor again by charity, nor even by ritual can I be seen in this form (with four arms) as you have seen Me. (53)

In verses 27 and 28 of Chapter IX the Lord invited Arjuna to dedicate to Him whatever he offered as oblation to the sacred fire, whatever he bestowed as a gift and whatever he did by way of penance, assuring him that he would thereby be freed from the bonds of Karma and attain Him. Again, we are told in XVII. 25 that the seekers of liberation perform acts of sacrifice, penance and charity without seeking any return. This leads to the conclusion that the performance of sacrifices, charity and austere penance are positively conducive to liberation and God-Realization. In the present verse, however, the Lord says that His four-armed divine form can be seen neither by study of the Vedas nor by penance, nor again by charity, nor even by ritual. Although these statements appear as mutually contradictory, there is really no contradiction between them; for offering of actions to God is a part of the practice of exclusive devotion. While discussing the subject of exclusive devotion in verse 55 below, the Lord Himself speaks of the devotee as 'Matkarmakṛt' (performing actions for My sake); whereas in verse 54 He proclaims in unequivocal terms that through single-minded devotion He can be seen in His four-armed divine

form, known in essence and even entered into. Thus it should be definitely understood that actions such as the performance of sacrifices, charity and penance, carried on in a disinterested spirit for the sake of God and as an offering to God, being parts of devotion, are conducive to God-Realization; and not those performed with an interested motive. That is to say, actions such as the performance of sacrifices, penance etc. mentioned above cannot by themselves lead to God-perception. God-vision is vouchsafed only through His grace by lovingly surrendering oneself to Him in a disinterested spirit.

The present verse cannot be taken to refer to the Cosmic Body inasmuch as the same has already been glorified in almost identical words in verse 48. Hence to interpret the present verse also as uttered in praise of the Cosmic Body would be exposing the Lord to the charge of tautology. Moreover, with regard to the Cosmic Body it has been declared by the Lord that it could not be seen by anyone else than Arjuna; whereas He goes on to suggest the means of perceiving the form under reference in the following verse. Therefore, the way in which we have interpreted the present verse is fully justified.

*Having discarded the means by which He could not be perceived, the Lord now suggests the means by which He can be directly perceived.*

भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन ।

ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परंतप ॥ ५४ ॥

तु but; परंतप O scorcher of enemies; अर्जुन O Arjuna; अनन्यया भक्त्या through exclusive devotion; एवंविधः endowed with such a form; अहम् I; द्रष्टुम्

# Kalyana-Kalpataru

Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His four-armed form



“Through single-minded devotion, however, I can be seen in this form ( with four arms ), nay, known and even entered into, O valiant Arjuna.”  
( XL 54. )

of being (actually) seen; च and; तत्त्वेन ज्ञातुम् being known in essence; च and; प्रवेष्टुम् being entered into; शक्यः (am) capable.

Through single-minded devotion, however, I can be seen in this form (with four arms), nay, known in essence and even entered into, O valiant Arjuna. (54)

Developing exclusive love for God and devoting once for all one's mind, senses, body, wealth and all other worldly possessions and even one's own dear and near ones entirely to His service, regarding them as belonging to Him, is what is spoken of here as 'single-minded devotion'. It has been dealt with at length in the following verse while discussing the marks of devotees possessed of such devotion.

It may be contended here that Sāṅkhyayoga or the Path of Knowledge too has been declared elsewhere as leading to God-Realization. How, then, can it be said that exclusive devotion is the only means of perceiving, knowing

and entering into God? Our reply to this contention is that the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga has been declared as a means of realizing the attributeless Brahma or the Absolute; and this is wholly true. But it cannot be maintained that the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga will bring one face to face with the divine four-armed form of God endowed with attributes. For God is not bound to appear in an embodied form before one who treads the path of Knowledge. Again, perception of God with attributes is the subject that is being discussed in these verses. Hence it is but reasonable to speak of single-minded devotion as the only means of attaining God-vision etc.

*Perception and Knowledge of, and absorption into, God having been declared as easily attainable through single-minded devotion, one is naturally inclined to ask: What is single-minded devotion? Anticipating this question the Lord now proceeds to discuss the marks of one who is possessed of such devotion.*

मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः ।

निर्वैरः सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव ॥ ५५ ॥

पाण्डव O son of Pāṇḍu, Arjuna; यः who; मत्कर्मकृत् (is) given to performing all his duties only for My sake; मत्परमः (is) dependent on Me; मद्भक्तः (is) devoted to Me; सङ्गवर्जितः (is) free from attachment; सर्वभूतेषु towards all beings; निर्वैरः (is) free from malice; सः he (the man possessed of exclusive devotion); माम् Me; एति reaches.

Arjuna, he who performs all his duties for My sake, depends on Me, is devoted to Me, has no attachment, and is free from malice towards all beings, reaches Me. (55)

He who has renounced all forms of attachment, and regarding everything as selfishness, the sense of possession and belonging to God, and himself as a mere



instrument, carries on all his duties such as the performance of sacrifices, charity, penance and all bodily functions and worldly transactions in a disinterested spirit only for the pleasure of God and according to His commands, is referred to here as 'Matkarmakṛt'.

'Matparamah' is he who looks upon God alone as his supreme refuge and highest goal, the only object worthy of being approached for protection, the best of all beings, all-sustaining and all-powerful, the universal friend, nay, his dearest and nearest one and all-in-all, and always takes every dispensation of God most cheerfully.

Again, a devotee of God is he who, having developed exclusive love for Him, remains absorbed in Him, and is ever uninterruptedly engaged in hearing, chanting and reflecting on His name, form, virtues, glory and stories etc., and knows no peace without these practices even for a moment, and is ever most eagerly

looking forward to a vision of God.

The term 'Sangavarjitah' refers to him who is entirely free from attachment for all objects of enjoyment of this world and the next, e. g., body, wife, children, home, wealth, family, honour, fame and heavenly bliss etc., and has no love whatsoever for anything else than God.

He who being armed with the conviction that all living beings are but manifestations of God, or that God alone pervades them all, conceives no hatred for anyone even on receiving the worst treatment from others is referred to here as free from malice towards all.

The pronouns 'Yaḥ' and 'Saḥ' refer to an individual possessing single-minded devotion to God as defined in the above verse. And attaining God here means obtaining a vision of God with attributes, knowing Him in essence, and entering into Him as mentioned in the preceding verse.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे विश्वरूपदर्शनयोगो  
नामैकादशोऽध्यायः ॥ ११ ॥

*Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the eleventh chapter entitled "The Yoga of Vision of the Cosmic Body".*





## Chapter XII

The twelfth chapter of the Gita deals with Devotion to God along with various forms of spiritual discipline and discusses the marks of devotees. It begins and ends with devotion. Only three verses of this chapter are devoted to a discussion of the discipline of Knowledge, and that too as a part of the discussion on devotion. That is why this chapter has been given the title of "The Yoga of Devotion".

The chapter opens with a question from Arjuna as to which of the two is superior—the worshipper of God with form and attributes or the worshipper of the formless and attributeless Brahma. Verse 2 contains the Lord's reply to the above question, declaring the worshipper of God with form and attributes as superior. The third and fourth describe the characteristic of the formless and attributeless Brahma and declare that worship of the Absolute also leads to the realization of God; while verse 5 shows that worship of the Unmanifest is difficult for one who is centred in the body. The sixth and seventh contain the assurance of the Lord that He personally comes to the rescue of the devotee who, surrendering all actions to Him, constantly and exclusively thinks of Him. In verse 8 the Lord commands Arjuna to surrender his mind and intellect to Him, assuring him that he will thereby realize Him. Thereafter, from the ninth to the eleventh, He successively exhorts Arjuna to practise concentration of mind, or, in the event of his failure to surrender his mind and intellect, to work for His sake, or to relinquish the fruit of all actions if he finds himself unable to work for His sake. Verse 12 declares renunciation of the fruit of actions as the best form of discipline and as immediately leading to the attainment of lasting peace. Thereafter, from the thirteenth to the nineteenth the Lord discusses the marks of His beloved, enlightened and saintly devotees; whereas in the last or twentieth verse He declares those practicants as extremely dear to Him, who hold such enlightened devotees as their model and reverently follow in their footsteps.

*From Chapter II right up to the end of Chapter XI the Lord glorified at various places the worship of God with form and attributes. Chapters VII to XI, among others, specially bring out the glory and importance of such worship. Side by side with this, verses 17 to 26 of Chapter V, verses 24 to 29 of Chapter VI, verses 11 to 13 of Chapter VIII and many other verses besides these show the importance of the worship of the formless and attributeless Brahma. Finally, declaring God-Realization as the reward*

*of exclusive devotion to God with form and attributes towards the end of Chapter XI, the Lord paid a special tribute in the concluding verse of that chapter to him who is devoted to such a God. This raised the question in Arjuna's mind as to which of the two is better—the worshipper of the formless and attributeless Brahma, or the worshipper of God with form and attributes. Accordingly Arjuna puts the following question to the Lord:—*

अर्जुन उवाच

एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।

ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥ १ ॥

ये who; भक्ताः loving devotees; एवम् in the aforesaid manner; सततयुक्ताः constantly engaged (in adoring and meditating on You); त्वाम् You (i. e., God with attributes); च and; ये who; अक्षरम् अव्यक्तम् the indestructible Unmanifest Brahma (who is Truth, Knowledge and Bliss solidified); अपि alone; पर्युपासते worship (as the supreme Reality); तेषाम् of both these (types of worshippers); योगवित्तमाः the best knowers of Yoga; के who (are).

Arjuna said: The devotees who, with their minds constantly fixed on You as shown above, adore You as possessed of form and attributes, and those who adore as the supreme Reality only the indestructible unmanifest Brahma (who is Truth, Knowledge and Bliss solidified)—of these two types of worshippers who are the best knowers of Yoga? (1)

The indeclinable 'Evam' refers to the process of single-minded devotion described in verse 55 of the preceding chapter.

The personal pronoun 'Twām,' though obviously referring in this verse to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, should be interpreted in a wider sense as covering the various embodied forms assumed by God during His various descents on earth, as well as the form in which He ever resides in His divine abode, and which people represent in various forms and call by various names according to their own respective persuasion and belief; for all those forms are identical with Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Constantly meditating on such a personal God and devoting all one's senses to His service with supreme faith and love and in a disinterested spirit, this is what is

meant by adoring Him as a supreme Reality while remaining constantly engaged in His thought.

The word 'Avyaktam', qualified by the adjective 'Akṣaram', evidently stands here for the formless and attributeless Brahma, who is Truth, Knowledge and Bliss solidified. Even though the Jīvātmā or the individual soul can also be referred to as 'Akṣara' and 'Avyakta', such an interpretation of these terms is not intended by Arjuna; for the worshipper of the Jīvātmā cannot possibly be superior to the worshipper of God with attributes, and nowhere in the foregoing verses does the Lord prescribe the worship of the individual soul.

Although the worshippers of both the qualified and absolute aspects of God are

noble and praiseworthy in the eyes of of worshippers. This is what he seeks Arjuna, he is anxious to know the relative to elicit from the Lord through the above worth and excellence of the two types question.

*In reply to the above question of Arjuna, the Lord gives His verdict in favour of the worshippers of God with attributes.*

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।

श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥ २ ॥

मयि on Me; मनः the mind; आवेश्य focussing; नित्ययुक्ताः constantly engaged (in adoring and meditating on Me); ये who; परया श्रद्धया with supreme faith; उपेताः endowed; माम् Me (i.e., God with attributes); उपासते worship; ते they; मे by Me; युक्ततमाः the best of all Yogis; मताः are considered.

Sri Bhagavān said: I consider them to be the best Yogis, who endowed with supreme faith, and ever united through meditation with Me, worship Me with the mind centred on Me. (2)

Like the celebrated cowherd damsels of Vraja, a devotee has his mind absorbed in God almighty, who is the supreme object of love, the inner controller of all and the repository of all virtues, and is ever engaged in loving meditation on His virtues, glory and essence even while attending to his daily round of activities.\* This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

than evident, the existence of God, His various descents, His utterances, power, virtues, glory, sports and greatness etc. is what is known as supreme faith; and he who cultivates absolute dependence on God like the great devotee Prahlāda is said to be 'endowed with supreme faith'.

The adjective 'Yuktatamāḥ' is a synonym of the word 'Yogavittamāḥ' (knowers of Yoga) used in the preceding

Accepting with reverence, as more verse.

*The verdict of the Lord contained in the foregoing verse in favour of the worshippers of God with form and attributes raises the question whether the worshippers of the formless and attributeless Brahma are not the best knowers of Yoga. The question is answered in the next two verses.*

\* या दोहनेऽवहन्ने मथनोपलेपप्रेङ्खेनार्भरदितोक्षणमार्जनादौ ।

गायन्ति चैनमनुकथिष्योऽश्रुकण्ठ्यो धन्या ब्रजक्षिय उरुक्रमचित्तयानाः ॥

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatā X. 44. 15)

"Blessed are the Gopis of Vraja, who have their mind absorbed in the thought of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and sing His glories with a heart full of love, eyes bedewed with tears and a voice choked with emotion even while milking their cows, pounding the corn for removing the husk, churning the curds, plastering the courtyard with cow-dung, swinging infants in the cradle, lulling their crying children to sleep, sprinkling water on the floors and sweeping them, and doing everything else."

ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते ।  
 सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम् ॥ ३ ॥  
 संनियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।  
 ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ ४ ॥

तु however; ये who; इन्द्रियग्रामम् the aggregate of their senses; संनियम्य fully controlling; अचिन्त्यम् beyond the grasp of mind and intellect; सर्वत्रगम् omnipresent; अनिर्देश्यम् indefinable; कूटस्थम् changeless; ध्रुवम् constant; अचलम् immovable; च and; अव्यक्तम् unmanifest; अक्षरम् the indestructible (Brahma); पर्युपासते constantly adore (as their very self); ते they; सर्वभूतहिते to the welfare of all beings; रताः devoted; सर्वत्र towards all; समबुद्धयः even-minded; माम् Me; एव alone; प्राप्नुवन्ति attain.

Those, however, who fully controlling all their senses and even-minded towards all, and devoted to the welfare of all beings, constantly adore as their very self the unthinkable, omnipresent, indestructible, indefinable, eternal, immovable, unmanifest and changeless Brahma, they too come to Me. ( 3, 4 )

That which is all-pervading like ether—fills every atom of space—is called 'Sarvatraḡa.'

'Anirdeśya' is that which cannot be defined, which cannot be represented or indicated by any device or illustration.

That which never undergoes change under any circumstance whatsoever, and ever remains in the same state of existence, is called 'Kūṭastha'.

That which is eternal and certain, whose existence is free from doubt and which never ceases to be, is called 'Dhruva'.

'Achala' signifies that which is incapable of motion and vibration both.

'Avyakta' means that which is beyond the grasp of, or imperceptible by, the senses, and which is devoid of any shape or form.

'Akṣara' is that which can never and on no account be destroyed.

All these attributes are characteristics of the absolute, formless Brahma. And the best way to worship Brahma is to realize Its true character as pointed out above and constantly meditate on It as one's own self.

Even as a man lacking true wisdom is devoted to his own welfare, worshippers of the Absolute, identified as they are with all beings, are equally devoted to the good of all creatures. This is what is meant by the adjectival phrase 'Sarvabhūtahite Ratāḡh'.

Similarly, the phrase 'Sarvatra Samabuddhayaḡh' indicates that those who worship the absolute, formless Brahma in the aforesaid manner lose all sense of distinction between one self and another. Seeing no reality apart from Brahma in the whole universe, they naturally become even-minded towards all.

The assurance contained in the present verse, viz., that the worshippers of the

Absolute also come to the Lord, proclaims His identity with the Absolute. The intention is to show that in reality the one supreme Brahma or God alone has been represented in different forms for being worshipped by different individuals according to their respective qualifications. Of these, the transcendent and inconceivable absolute aspect of God, which is beyond the reach of mind and speech, is in fact one; whereas the Saguna or relative aspect of God is twofold in character, viz., (i) possessed of form and (ii) devoid of form. That which pervades the whole universe and is the support of all, and which by its inconceivable power sustains and nourishes all, is the unmanifest or formless qualified aspect of God. Śrī Śiva, Śrī Viṣṇu, Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and so on are the embodied forms of God; whereas this universe represents the Comic Form of God. Therefore,

realization of the Absolute resulting from the type of adoration mentioned above means the attainment of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; for the Absolute is the same as God and God is the same as the Absolute. The two are identical. The same idea is echoed in XIV. 27, where the Lord declares Himself as the support of Brahma (ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहम्).

In Chapter XI the Lord says that through single-minded devotion one can see Him, know Him in essence, and even enter into Him (XI. 54). This shows that while true knowledge and realization of God are shared with the devotee even by the worshipper of the Absolute, God is not bound to grant the vision of His embodied form to the latter. The worshipper of the Saguna aspect of God, however, obtains this vision as well. Herein lies the superiority of the devotee.

*Thus discussing the worship of the Absolute and its reward, the Lord now declares that at-one-ment with the Unmanifest is difficult to attain for those who are centred in the body, and that the path leading to such at-one-ment is also rugged.*

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तसक्तचेतसाम् ।

अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥ ५ ॥

तेषाम् अव्यक्तसक्तचेतसाम् for those aforesaid persons who have their mind attached to the Unmanifest; क्लेशः the strain; अधिकतरः (is) greater; हि because; देहवद्भिः by those centred in the body; अव्यक्ता गतिः at-one-ment with the Unmanifest; दुःखम् with difficulty; अवाप्यते is attained.

Of course, the strain is greater for those who have their mind attached to the Unmanifest; for at-one-ment with the Unmanifest is attained with difficulty by those who are centred in the body. (5)

The pronoun 'Teṣām', qualified by the adjective 'Avyaktāsaktachetasām', refers to the worshippers of the Absolute (who is Truth, Knowledge and Bliss solidified) mentioned in the preceding verse. By calling their path as more rugged the Lord shows that the truth relating to the Absolute is extremely

difficult to grasp. It can be understood only by those whose intellect is unsullied, steady and penetrating and who have no identification with the body. It beats the comprehension of the common man. Hence the worship of the Absolute involves considerable strain in its initial stages.

The latter half of the verse explains

how the worship of the Absolute involves greater strain. The intention is to show that so long as there is identification with the body, the truth relating to the Absolute is most difficult to grasp.

Here it may be contended that whereas the present verse declares the worship of the Unmanifest as involving greater strain, verse 2 of Chapter IX shows Jñāna and Vijñāna, i. e., Knowledge of the Nirguṇa and Saguṇa aspects of God as easy to attain (कर्तुम् सुसुखम्), and is followed by a description of the Unmanifest in verses 4, 5 and 6. Though these two statements appear as mutually contradictory, there is, as a matter of fact, no contradiction between them. For the words 'Jñāna' and 'Vijñāna' in Chapter IX have a special reference to the virtues, glory and reality of the qualified aspect of God; hence it is the practice of surrender to God with attributes that has been declared as 'easy to practise' in that context. Again, the word 'Avyakta' occurring in verse 4 of that Chapter stands for the formless God with attributes. That is why He has been spoken of as the sustainer and nourisher of beings, all-pervading and as responsible for the creation etc. of all beings, even though standing aloof from all.

Again, it may be argued that after

delineating the process of worship of the Absolute in verses 24 to 27 of Chapter VI the Lord declares in verse 28 that the practisant who sedulously follows this practice easily attains supreme bliss in the shape of God-Realization. That too should not be taken as conflicting in any way with the statement contained in the present verse. For the verses mentioned above refer to the Yogī who has been rid of all sins, in whom the impulses of Rajas (activity) and Tamas (inertia) have been stilled, and who stands identified with Brahma, and not to those who are centred in the body. Hence it is but reasonable to say that realization of Brahma comes to them easily and as a matter of course.

Here it may be asked: Do the worshippers of the Absolute alone have to undergo considerable strain in course of their practice, and not the worshippers of God with attributes? Our reply is: No, the worshippers of God with attributes have not to undergo much strain. For, in the first place, the worship of God with attributes is easy to practise. Secondly, the worshipper of God with attributes depends exclusively on God and is constantly engaged in His thought; hence God Himself helps him in every way. Why, then, should he undergo any strain in course of his practice?

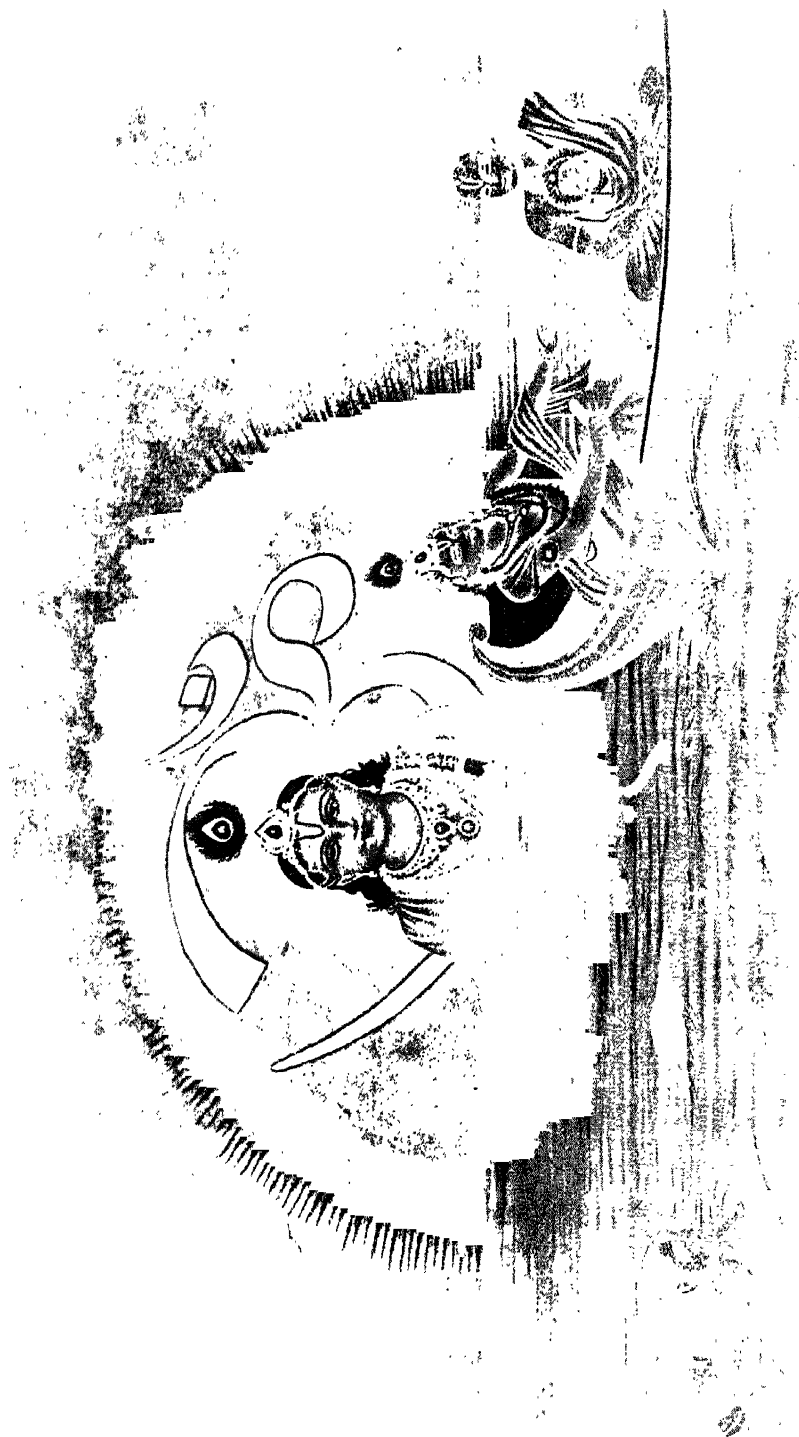
*Thus declaring God-Realization through the worship of the attributeless and formless Brahma as difficult to attain for those centred in the body, the Lord now shows in the following two verses that He is speedily and easily attained through worship of His qualified aspect.*

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्पराः ।

अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥ ६ ॥

तु on the other hand; ये who; मत्पराः depending on Me; सर्वाणि कर्माणि all actions; मयि to Me; संन्यस्य surrendering; माम् Me (God with attributes); एव alone; अनन्येन योगेन with single-minded devotion; ध्यायन्तः (constantly) meditating on Me; उपासते worship.

## The Easier Way



“These, Arjuna, I speedily deliver from the ocean of birth and death, their mind being fixed on Me.”  
( XIL 7. )



On the other hand, those who depending exclusively on Me, and surrendering all actions to Me, worship Me ( God with attributes ), constantly meditating on Me with single-minded devotion. ( 6 )

The indeclinable 'Tu' is intended to distinguish the worshippers of God with attributes from the worshippers of the Absolute.

Those who depend on God remain undaunted and unperturbed like the great devotee Prahlāda even when faced with trials and tribulations of various kinds. Nay, they take those sorrows and sufferings not only as a boon from God but as something agreeable, and surrender themselves to God, knowing Him to be the supreme lover, the highest goal, the greatest friend and worth resorting to in every way. All this is conveyed by the adjectival compound 'Matparāh'.

Again, he who surrenders all actions to God performs all his duties according to His directions and hints as a mere puppet, denying himself freedom of action. He neither acknowledges those actions as his own nor does he conceive any attachment for them and is altogether

unconcerned about their fruit. All his activities conform to the canons of the scriptures and are governed by the idea that he is a mere instrument, utterly incapable of doing anything, and that it is God who is getting everything done by him according to His own will.

'Single-minded devotion' means exclusive and disinterested love, combined with utmost reverence, for God. He who cultivates this love recognizes no one else than God as his own and feels that He is everything to him. Again, such a love is wholly untainted by selfishness, egoism and inconstancy; it is consummate in every respect and unshakable. It is wholly undivided and is so intense that it makes it impossible for the lover to forget the Beloved even for a moment. And worshipping God through such devotion is to listen to and sing His virtues, glory and stories, and loudly chant or mutter His names.

तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।  
भवामि नचिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥ ७ ॥

पार्थ O son of Prthā ( Kunti ), Arjuna; मयि on Me; आवेशितचेतसाम् तेषाम् of those persons having their mind fixed; अहम् I; नचिरात् without delay, speedily; मृत्युसंसारसागरात् from the ocean of worldly existence, which is synonymous with mortality; समुद्धर्ता deliverer; भवामि I become.

These, Arjuna, I speedily deliver from the ocean of birth and death, their mind being fixed on Me. ( 7 )

The demonstrative pronoun 'Teṣām', qualified by the adjectival phrase 'Mayi Āveśitachetasām' refers to the loving devotees worshipping God with attributes and spoken of in the preceding verse as having their mind and intellect merged once for all in God.

Everything in this world is embraced by death. With the exception of God nothing which makes its appearance in the universe is ever immune, even for a moment, from the buffets of death. And even as countless waves continue to rise and fall on the surface of the ocean,

so do births and deaths constantly take place in this world. It may be possible to count the waves of the ocean; but there is no knowing how many times a soul will have to undergo birth and death so long as he does not realize God. That is why this world has been compared to an ocean.

God speedily exempts from birth and death once for all, and brings face to face with Himself in this very life, those devotees who constantly worship Him

with their mind and intellect fixed on Him, as stated above; or He takes them after death to His supreme abode. Nay, even as a boatman takes one in his boat across a river, so does God warding off all difficulties and dangers confronting the devotee, takes him across the terrible ocean of worldly existence to His own supreme abode. This is what is meant by His delivering the devotee from the ocean of birth and death.

*Thus showing in the above verses that worship of God with attributes is easier to practise than that of the Absolute, the Lord now commands Arjuna to take to the former, fixing his mind and intellect on God as indicated above.*

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।

निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥ ८ ॥

मयि on Me; मनः the mind; आधत्स्व fix; मयि ( and ) in Me; एव only; बुद्धिम् ( your ) intellect; निवेशय establish; अतः ऊर्ध्वम् thereafter; मयि in Me; एव only; निवसिष्यसि you shall abide; संशयः doubt; न ( there is ) not.

Therefore, fix your mind on Me, and establish your intellect in Me alone; thereafter you will abide solely in Me. There is no doubt about it. ( 8 )

Pervading the whole universe consisting of animate and inanimate beings, God is enshrined in the heart of all. He is an ocean of countless virtues like compassion, omniscience, amiability and cordiality etc. Nay, He is supreme, transcendent and omnipotent, all love and joy, the best of all beings and worth resorting to. He who, having thoroughly grasped the truth and mystery of His virtues, glory and sports, is ever unshaken in his conclusions is said to have established his intellect in God. And he who, having wholly withdrawn his attachment from everything else than his most beloved Puruṣottama or God, merges his mind in Him alone and remains constantly engaged in His thought in the aforesaid manner is said to have fixed his mind on God.

He who is thus able to fix his mind and intellect on God speedily attains Him.

Although this is a fact, very few people actually fix their mind and intellect on God. The reason is not far to seek. Being ignorant of the truth and mystery of God's virtues etc., people have no love and reverence for Him; and since their attachment, which is rooted in ignorance, is still there, worldly enjoyments continue to absorb their thought. Such is the condition of most of the people in this world. That is why the generality of men do not as a rule fix their mind and intellect on God.

This attachment, which has its root in ignorance and is responsible for our evil habit of dwelling on worldly enjoyments, can, however, be got rid of through knowledge of the truth and mystery of the divine virtues, glory and sports. And this knowledge may be gained through the

association of exalted souls who are aware of the truth and secret of God's virtues etc., by emulating their virtues and example, and by diligently following the path chalked out by them, giving up enjoyments, lethargy and error.

*At this point it may be asked: If a man fails to fix his mind and intellect on God as suggested above, what should he do? Anticipating this question, the Lord says:—*

अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम् ।

अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनंजय ॥ ९ ॥

अथ in case; चित्तम् the mind; मयि on Me; स्थिरम् steadily; समाधातुम् to fix; न शक्नोषि you cannot; ततः then; धनंजय O Arjuna (*lit.*, conqueror of riches); अभ्यासयोगेन through the Yoga of repeated practice; माम् Me; आप्तुम् to attain; इच्छ seek.

If you cannot steadily fix the mind on Me, Arjuna, then seek to attain Me through the Yoga of repeated practice. ( 9 )

The teaching of the Gītā, though immediately directed towards Arjuna, is intended for the benefit of the whole world. The temperament of all practicants in the world is not uniform; that is why the same mode of spiritual practice cannot suit all. Only different types of spiritual discipline suit different temperaments. Hence the Lord suggests a different course of discipline for those who find themselves unable to fix their mind and intellect on God.

'Abhyāsayoga' means repeatedly striving, through various devices, to fix the mind on God with a view to His Realization. Thus endeavouring again and again, for the sake of God-Realization, to fix the mind on any name, form, virtue and sport, etc. of God which attracts him, and for which he has got some reverence, is what is meant by seeking to attain God through the Yoga of repeated practice.

Practices of various kinds have been recommended in the Śāstras for focussing the mind on God. Of them the following few devices appear particularly suited to the bulk of the Sādhakas:—

( 1 ) It is a matter of common experience that, when we close our eyes in front of the sun, we see through our mental eye a mass of splendour uniformly extending all around us. Concluding with the mind that the mass of effulgence constituting the Godhead is thousands of times brighter than the above light, attempt should be made again and again to fix one's mind on that shining, all-effulgent form of God.

( 2 ) Knowing God Almighty to be present everywhere, even as fire is ever present in a match, and the sole object of love, He should be lovingly conceived with all His virtues and glory wherever the mind goes. Such a practice brings the devotee face to face with the all-pervasive God even as friction reveals the fire hidden in a match.

( 3 ) Withdrawing the mind from the object it runs after, try to fix it again and again with reverence and love on a mental or material image ( made of clay, stone or wood ), or a picture of your chosen Deity, be it Bhagavān Viṣṇu, Śiva, Rāma or Kṛṣṇa, or on the Japa of His sacred names.

( 4 ) Repeating the sacred syllable OM without pause in imitation of the humming of the bee, contemplate on God, again and again, in that sound.

( 5 ) Practise constant Japa of the Divine Name in rhythm with every natural flow of the ingoing and outgoing breath.

( 6 ) Diligently pursue the study of sacred books with a view to grasping the secret of God's name, form, virtue, sports and glory.

( 7 ) Practise Prāṇāyāma or control of breath as described in IV. 29.

If any of these practices is pursued

with reverence, faith and devotion, it will gradually eradicate all sins, remove all obstacles and finally bring the practi-  
cant face to face with God. Therefore, the practice should be continued with exemplary zeal and diligence. Of course, the fruition of his efforts may be speeded up or delayed according to the spiritual level and qualification of the practican-  
t and the progress made by him on the path of Sādhana. Therefore, if the realiza-  
tion of the fruit is delayed, the practican-  
t should neither give up nor slacken the practice, regarding it as difficult, or due to  
ennui or sloth.

*It may be asked here: If a practican-  
t is unable to follow the Yoga of  
repeated practice, what should he do? Anticipating this question, the Lord says:—*

अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव ।

मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन् सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि ॥ १० ॥

अभ्यासे to ( the pursuit of ) such practice; अपि even; असमर्थः unequal; असि ( if ) you are; मत्कर्मपरमः intent on performing actions for Me; भव be; मदर्थम् for My sake; कर्माणि actions; कुर्वन् performing; अपि even; सिद्धिम् perfection ( in the shape of My Realization ); अवाप्स्यसि you shall attain.

If you are unequal even to the pursuit of such practice, be intent to work for Me; you shall attain perfection ( in the shape of My realization ) even by performing actions for My sake. ( 10 )

Although, as a matter of fact, it was in no way difficult for Arjuna to fix his mind on God, or realize Him through the Yoga of repeated practice as stated above, the Lord asks him not to despair even if he found himself unequal to the task, and suggests a third alternative. For, as already pointed out above, different types of practices are suited to different individuals due to difference in tempera-  
ment. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

The compound word 'Matkarma' denotes those actions which are performed only for the sake of God or are connected

with His service or adoration, nay, in which the practican-  
t has no trace of self-interest and for which he appropriates no credit to himself nor conceives any attachment whatsoever. The word has already appeared in the concluding verse of Chapter XI, and has been duly explained.

He who recognizes God and God alone as his supreme refuge and highest goal and goes on constantly performing through mind, speech and body actions enjoined by the scriptures, such as sacrifices, charity and penance, with utmost reverence and love only for the pleasure of God and as a matter of duty is said to be 'intent on work for God.'

By the second half of this verse the Lord indicates that even actions performed for His sake constitute an independent and easy means to His Realization. God can be attained even by those who work for Him, in the same way as by those who adore and meditate on Him. Therefore, performing actions for His sake is in no way inferior to the other practices mentioned above.

*Here one may ask: If the practicant finds himself unable even to perform actions for God's sake as stated above, what should he do ? Anticipating this question, the Lord says:—*

अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि कर्तुं मद्योगमाश्रितः ।

सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान् ॥ ११ ॥

अथ if; मद्योगम् the Yoga of My Realization; आश्रितः devoted to; एतत् this; कर्तुम् to do; अपि even; अशक्तः unable; असि you are; ततः then; यतात्मवान् having subdued ( your ) mind and intellect etc.; सर्वकर्मफलत्यागम् renunciation of the fruit of all actions; कुरु take recourse to.

If, taking recourse to the Yoga of My realization, you are unable even to do this, then, subduing your mind and intellect etc., relinquish the fruit of all actions. ( 11 )

In reality, it was not at all difficult for Arjuna to tread the path of Action coupled with Devotion; nay, it was rather easy for him. Nevertheless, if he regarded it as actually difficult, the Lord now suggests a fourth type of discipline for him. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the first half of this verse.

The word 'Ātman', forming part of the compound 'Yatātmavān' stands for the body including the mind, intellect and senses. Therefore, 'Yatātmavān' is he who has acquired control over his mind, intellect, senses and body. The mind and senses etc., unless they are brought under control, forcibly drag one into the mire of enjoyments; and caught in the mire of enjoyments one cannot give up attachment to or yearning for the fruit of all actions in the shape of enjoyments. Therefore, recognizing the supreme need of self-control in renouncing the fruit of all actions the Lord advises Arjuna to subdue his mind and senses,

One may ask here: How is it that the Lord does not insist on self-control as a part of the spiritual practices enjoined in verses 6 to 10 above ? The reason is not far to seek. It will be seen that verses 6, 7 and 8 of this chapter deal with those who practise single-minded devotion to God. Since such loving devotees of God have no attraction for the enjoyments of the world, their mind and intellect remain naturally indifferent towards the world and centred on God. Hence there was no occasion for insisting on their subjugation in those verses.

Verse 9 speaks of the Yoga of repeated practice or Abhyāsayoga; and since 'Abhyāsayoga' covers all practices for fixing the mind and intellect on God there was no necessity of insisting on self-control separately in that verse. And verse 10 speaks of the path of Action coupled with Devotion, which presupposes dependence on God; and all actions of the practicant following this

path are also performed only for the sake of God. Hence it was unnecessary to ask Arjuna to control his mind and senses etc. as a separate discipline. The present verse, however, enjoins the practice of Karmayoga in the shape of renunciation of the fruit of all actions, in which control of the mind and intellect is indispensable. For if the mind, intellect and senses are not kept under control while performing all the duties of the world appropriate to one's grade in society and stage in life, it is very easy for the mind, intellect and the senses to develop attachment and craving for, and the sense of possession in respect of, sense-enjoyments; and so long as they are present total renunciation of the fruit of actions cannot be accomplished. That is why Arjuna has been specially warned in this verse to subdue his mind and intellect etc.

"All actions" in this verse include the performance of sacrifices, charity, austerity, social service and all other activities approved of by the Śāstras and carried on for the sake of one's livelihood or for bare maintenance in conformity with one's grade in society and stage in life. While duly performing these actions, he who renounces all connection with, attachment to, and the craving for, their fruit in the form of enjoyments of this world and the next is said to renounce the fruit of all actions.

Here it should be noted that prohibited actions, such as telling lies, practising duplicity and committing adultery, violence and theft etc., are not included in the 'Sarvakarma' referred to in this verse. Attachment to, and the craving for, enjoyments alone is responsible for sinful acts of this kind, which bring about man's degradation from every point of view. That is why the scriptures advise actual and total renunciation of such acts; when such actions themselves stand prohibited, renunciation of their fruit is altogether out of question.

It will be recalled here that the Lord, in the first instance, called upon Arjuna to fix his mind and intellect on Him; He next recommended the Yoga of repeated practice; thereafter He asked Arjuna to work for His sake; and, finally, He exhorted him to renounce the fruit of all actions. It will be further seen that the Lord advises an alternative course only in the event of Arjuna's inability to follow the one previously suggested. The method adopted by the Lord, however, does not imply any disparity in the fruit of the various practices recommended by Him; for they all bear the same fruit, viz., God-Realization. Nor is it intended to convey that the practice suggested as an alternative is easier than the one recommended before; for such is not actually the case. A practice which is easy for one may be difficult for another. On this ground it is reasonable to suppose that the four practices have been recommended only to suit the varying qualifications of different types of practicants.

Careful analysis will reveal that the practice enjoined in verse 8 is easy and suitable for the practicant in whose mental constitution there is predominance of love for God with attributes, and who has a natural reverence for God, and an inborn attraction for His virtues, glory and mysteries and the stories of His sports.

The practice recommended in verse 9 is easy and useful for the practicant who has no natural love for God but who, being endowed with faith, seeks to concentrate his mind on God through resolute practice.

Again, the practicant who has reverence for God with attributes, and a natural attraction for pursuits such as the performance of sacrifices, charity and penance, and has got faith in the worship and adoration of images etc. of God, will find the practice suggested in verse

10 easy and suited to his temperament.

And the practicant who has no natural love and reverence for God with attributes and form, who recognizes God as only all-pervading and formless, who has a natural bias for worldly pursuits and works of public good, and who because of his greater faith in and attraction for external activities cannot attune his mind even to the Yoga of repeated practice recommended in verse 9, will find the practice enjoined in the present verse easy and suited to his nature.

Now offering all actions to God, as mentioned in verse 6 above, performing all actions for His sake, and renouncing the fruit of all actions—all these three are different forms of Karmayoga; and as pointed out above, they all lead to God-Realization. Hence there is no disparity whatsoever in their fruit. They have been differentiated only because of the difference in the mental attitude of the practicants as well as in the process of their practice. In the first two processes the sentiment of devotion is predominant, whereas in the third the emphasis lies on the fruit of actions. Herein lies the main difference among them. Besides this, the practicant who has offered all his actions to God considers himself as a mere puppet in His hands; he feels that he is capable of doing nothing, that his mind, intellect, senses and all other organs belong to God, who gets everything done by them according to His own will, the practicant himself having nothing to do with those acts or their fruit. Inspired by such feelings, the practicant entertains not the least attraction or aversion for his actions or their fruit; taking all pleasurable or painful experiences that fall to his lot in consequence of his Prārabdha (good or evil destiny) as a boon from God, he remains ever cheerful. That is why, developing the feeling of oneness towards all, he speedily succeeds in realizing God.

He who works for God's sake does

not, like the above-mentioned practicant, feel that he does nothing and that it is God who gets everything done by him. He looks upon God as the object of highest worship, supremely loving and the greatest friend and well-wisher, and considers it his supreme duty to serve Him and carry out His behests. That is why, realizing His presence throughout the universe, he remains engaged in performance of sacrifices, charity and penance, earning his livelihood and performing other duties for the maintenance of his body in conformity with his grade in society and stage in life, as well as in pursuits connected with the worship and adoration etc. of God with a view to His service and according to His behests as conveyed through the scriptures. And since all his activities are carried on according to His behests and for the sake of His service (XI. 55), he is freed from attachment and desire for all such activities and their fruit, and speedily attains God.

The practicant who relinquishes the fruit of all actions, however, neither considers himself to be a tool in the hands of God nor does he feel that he does everything for His sake. He holds that man's right is to work only, but never to the fruit thereof (II. 47-51), so that his duty lies only in performing sacrifices, charity, austerity, social service and all other activities enjoined by the Śāstras, such as earning one's livelihood and attending to one's bodily needs etc. according to one's grade in society and stage in life. That is why he totally renounces all connection with, attachment to and desire for the fruit of such actions in the shape of the enjoyments of this world and the next (XVIII. 9); and being completely rid of attraction and aversion thereby, he quickly realizes God.

Thus, though the fruit of all the three practices is one and the same, viz., God-Realization, the difference in the

mental outlook of the practicants as well for three different practices having been as in the process of their practice accounts enunciated by the Lord.

*Recommending alternative practices one after another in verses 8 to 11 in the event of Arjuna's failure to adopt the one already suggested, the Lord finally insisted on his 'relinquishing the fruit of all actions'. This may naturally lead one to imagine that 'renunciation of the fruit of actions' must be an inferior type of Sādhana as compared to the other forms of spiritual discipline previously recommended. In order to remove such a doubt from Arjuna's mind, the Lord glorifies such renunciation in the next verse.*

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते ।

ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥ १२ ॥

अभ्यासात् than practice (without discernment); ज्ञानम् knowledge; श्रेयः (is) better; ज्ञानात् to knowledge; ध्यानम् meditation (on God); विशिष्यते is superior; ध्यानात् (even) than meditation; कर्मफलत्यागः renunciation of the fruit of actions (is better); हि because; त्यागात् from renunciation; अनन्तरम् immediately; शान्तिः (follows) peace.

Knowledge is better than practice (without discernment), meditation on God is superior to knowledge, and renunciation of the fruit of actions is even superior to meditation; for peace immediately follows from renunciation. (12)

The word 'Abhyāsa' in this verse does not stand for 'Abhyāsayoga' or the Yoga of repeated practice. For, if it is taken to mean the 'Yoga of repeated practice' undertaken with discernment for the realization of the Absolute, it would be meaningless to compare it with 'knowledge' inasmuch as such a practice is accompanied with knowledge. Even so, if the word is interpreted to mean practices undertaken for Karmayoga, or the practice of meditation, such practices form part of Karma-yoga and meditation respectively; hence there would be no sense in comparing them with meditation, or with the renunciation of the fruit of actions. Therefore, the word 'Abhyāsa' here denotes effort involving cessation of worldly activities, or in other words, practices such as the practice of Prāṇāyāma or breath-control, the attempt to achieve a

particular Āsana or Yogic posture, the practice of mind-control, the muttering of a sacred formula, recitation of hymns in praise of a deity, study of the Vedas etc., habitually carried on without discernment and involving no renunciation of desires or attachment, and to which one naturally feels inclined under the influence of faith, environment and inborn disposition. Even so, the word 'Jñāna' here does not mean the Path of Knowledge, or Knowledge itself in the form of true realization. For, if it is taken to mean Jñānayoga, it cannot be divorced from meditation which is part and parcel of that discipline; and if it is held to be an equivalent of true Knowledge, it is the fruit of all forms of discipline. In that case there would be no meaning in comparing it with mechanical practice, meditation or



renunciation of the fruit of actions, much less in declaring meditation or even renunciation of the fruit of actions as superior to it. The word 'Jñāna' in the present context should, therefore, be construed to mean discriminative knowledge or intellectual perception of a high order, gained either through a study of the scriptures or through association with saints, with the help of which man is no doubt able to distinguish the eternal from the ephemeral, matter from the spirit, good from evil, sin from virtue, and so on. But since his mind is yet impure and distracted, a man possessing such knowledge neither feels inclined to take to any practice or discipline nor is he able to renounce the fruit of actions and attachment, nor being freed from all relationship with the world he gets firmly and unshakably established in God.

Both 'Abhyāsa' and 'Jñāna' as interpreted above are in their own way helpful in God-Realization. Both can lead to this consummation if they are accompanied with faith, devotion and the disinterested spirit. Nevertheless, when a comparison is made between them, knowledge proves superior to practice; for practice without discernment cannot be so helpful in God-Realization as knowledge devoid of practice can. In order to show this very fact, the verse speaks of knowledge as better than practice.

The word 'Dhyāna' too in this verse does not refer to Dhyānayoga or the path of Meditation. That is to say, it neither stands for meditation on the attributeless Brahma, practised for the sake of God-Realization according to the procedure of Sāṅkhyayoga nor for meditation on God, the repository of all virtues, practised with faith and devotion only for the sake of His Realization, wholly renouncing the fruit of actions and attachment. For both these forms of meditation involve knowledge and renunciation of the fruit of actions; hence comparison between either of these two forms of meditation,

on the one hand, and knowledge or relinquishment of the fruit of actions, on the other, is quite out of question. Hence the word 'Dhyāna', in the present context, should be interpreted to mean meditation on any of the various forms of God, practised without discernment and with some interested motive.

Both 'Jñāna' and 'Dhyāna', as interpreted above, are in their own way helpful in God-Realization. They both lead to such consummation when accompanied with faith, devotion and the disinterested spirit. Nevertheless, when a comparison is made between them, meditation will prove superior to knowledge; for knowledge by itself, without meditation, cannot be so useful as meditation practised without knowledge. When one attains success in meditation, the impurity and distraction of the mind gradually disappear; but they cannot be eradicated through mere knowledge. It is with this idea that meditation has been declared as superior to knowledge.

'Karmaphalatyāga' is the same as 'Sarvakarmaphalatyāga' referred to in verse 11 above. The type of meditation referred to above is also helpful in God-Realization; but such realization cannot be easily attained so long as man's desire and attachment are not eradicated. Therefore, meditation not accompanied with renunciation of the fruit of actions cannot be so useful as renunciation of the fruit of, and attachment to, all actions can even without meditation. It should be particularly noted in this connection that the present verse is not intended to assess the relative value of Abhyāsayoga, Jñānayoga, Dhyānayoga and Karmayoga. On the other hand, it discusses the comparative merits of mechanical practice, knowledge and meditation as defined above; and while pointing out the superiority of the second to the first and of the third to the second, it declares renunciation of the fruit of all actions as superior to all. That is to say, even though the practices of Abhyāsa, Jñāna and Dhyāna, which

involve the cessation of worldly activities, are successively higher, and more Sattvic in character, than pursuits involving worldly activity such as the performance of sacrifices, charity, warfare, trade and social service etc., nevertheless one's own duty, though humblest in character, acquires the capacity to yield the highest result. viz., God-Realization, when performed with complete renunciation of its fruit.

and attachment. What wonder, then, that other-worldly pursuits like Abhyāsa, Jñāna and Dhyāna should lead to God-Realization when carried on with that object. Therefore, instead of drawing comparison between the various disciplines for God-Realization, man should choose for himself one which is suited to his temperament, and which he may be able to adopt easily and speedily, and devote himself to its practice with faith and reverence.

*Recommending in the above verses several practices for God-Realization as so many limbs of devotion, the Lord declared that they all lead to God-Realization. This naturally arouses in one's mind the desire to know the marks of a God-Realized devotee absorbed in divine love, and in order to satisfy such curiosity the Lord now describes in the next seven verses the marks of enlightened devotees who have realized God.*

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।

निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ १३ ॥

संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।

मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ १४ ॥

यः who; सर्वभूतानाम् towards all creatures; अद्वेष्टा (is) free from malice; मैत्रः friendly; च and; करुणः compassionate; एव indeed; निर्ममः devoid of the feeling of meum; निरहंकारः free from egoism; समदुःखसुखः treating pleasure and pain alike; क्षमी forgiving by nature; योगी mentally united with Me; सततम् ever; संतुष्टः contented; यतात्मा having subdued his mind, senses and body; दृढनिश्चयः firm of resolve; सः that; मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिः who has surrendered his mind and reason to Me; मद्भक्तः My own devotee; मे to Me; प्रियः (is) dear.

He who is free from malice towards all beings, friendly and compassionate, rid of 'I' and 'mine', balanced in joy and sorrow, forgiving by nature, ever-contented and mentally united with Me, nay, who has subdued his mind, senses and body, has a firm resolve, and has surrendered his mind and reason to Me,—that devotee of Mine is dear to Me. (13, 14)

Though directly connected with the adjective 'Advēṣṭā' only, the compound word 'Sarvabhūtānām' in the first of the above two verses has indirect reference to 'Maitraḥ' and 'Karuṇaḥ' as well. The intention is to show that the devotee who has realized God is not only free from malice towards all beings, but he is also their disinterested friend and

naturally compassionate to them all.

It may be contended here that a God-realized soul sees unity everywhere; how, then, can he cherish distinctive emotions like friendliness and compassion? Our answer to this question is that the practisant treading the path of devotion cultivates from the very

beginning the virtues of 'friendliness' and 'compassion' in a special degree; hence they become a part of his nature and are therefore easily discernible in his dealings even on his attaining perfection. Besides this, even as God is naturally full of boundless compassion and love etc., it is but meet and proper that His devotee too who has attained perfection, should possess these virtues.

The adjectives 'Nirmamaḥ' and 'Nirahankārah' are intended to convey that the enlightened devotee of God, inasmuch as he entertains the same feeling towards all, neither recognizes anyone as his own nor identifies himself with his own body; yet he cherishes motiveless love for all beings and is compassionate towards all. Herein lies his greatness. Even the devotee who is yet on the way to God-Realization can similarly show compassion and love to all; but he cannot be completely rid of 'I' and 'mine'.

The words 'Sukha' and 'Duhkha', forming part of the compound 'Samaduhkha-sukhaḥ' do not stand here for the feelings of 'joy' and 'grief', but for the causes of 'joy' and 'grief' respectively. Men who are steeped in ignorance have an attachment for pleasure and aversion for pain; hence pleasure excites the feeling of joy and pain that of grief in their heart. But the enlightened devotee, having lost all distinction between pleasure and pain, never experiences joy and grief under any circumstance whatsoever. The Śruti also says: हर्षशोकौ जहाति— "the man of wisdom wholly abandons joy and grief." (*Kātha*. I. ii. 12.) When as a result of evil destiny some ailment appears in his body, he will no doubt have the consciousness of suffering in the shape of bodily pain; and when his body is in sound health, he will have the consciousness of happiness in the form of absence of bodily pain. But, being free from likes and dislikes, he has no experience of joy and grief. Similarly,

he will not experience joy and grief even when he is brought in contact with, or separated from, any agreeable or disagreeable object, or faced with any favourable or adverse circumstance. This is what is meant by his remaining balanced in pleasure and pain.

He who instead of seeking to punish the wrongdoer gives him security from fear is said to be forgiving by nature. The enlightened devotees of God possess an infinite store of forgiveness. Having come to realize all as so many manifestations of God, they do not in fact hold anyone to blame for any incident. That is why they do not seek to punish anyone for a wrong done to them. This is what the Lord seeks to convey by speaking of his devotees as "forgiving by nature". The meaning of 'forgiveness' has been explained at length in the commentary on X. 4 under the name of 'forbearance'.

The word 'Yogī' in this verse stands for the enlightened devotee who has realized God through the practice of devotion. Having directly perceived God, who is an inexhaustible and endless storehouse of supreme Bliss, such a devotee remains ever contented. At no time and under no circumstance does he grumble over the lack of any worldly possession. He has all his desires fulfilled; therefore, no incident of the world robs him of his contentment. This is what the Lord means by speaking of His devotee as 'ever-contented'.

The contentment enjoyed by worldly-minded men is momentary; discontent reappears as soon as the object which brought them contentment by satisfying their desire disappears. That is why they cannot have perpetual contentment.

The body, senses and mind of the enlightened devotees of God are ever subject to their control. In other words, such devotees can never be swayed by their mind and senses. That is why

they are not liable to any evil propensity or conduct. This is what the Lord means by speaking of His devotee as 'Yatātmā'.

'Dr̥ḡhaniśchayah' is he who has fully determined the true nature of God by his intellect, who directly feels the presence of God everywhere, and whose intellect can never and on no account be shaken from its conviction with regard to God due to change of mood, activity or painful experience etc.

As the devotee goes on constantly meditating on God through the mind,

and determining His nature through the intellect, his mind and intellect get merged in Him for ever. This is what is meant by offering them to God.

To sum up, the enlightened devotee who cherishes motiveless and exclusive love for God, who is unshakably established in Him and is never disjoined from Him, whose mind and intellect stand dedicated to Him, to whom God is life, wealth, the vital breath and everything else, and who is a mere puppet in His hands, is declared by the Lord as dear to Him.

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।

हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥ १५ ॥

यस्मात् from whom; लोकः ( any ) creature; न not; उद्विजते shrinks; च and; यः who; लोकात् from ( any ) creature; न not; उद्विजते shrinks; च and; यः who; हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैः from delight, envy, fear and perturbation etc.; मुक्तः ( is ) free; सः he; मे to Me; प्रियः ( is ) dear.

He who is not a source of annoyance to his fellow-creatures, and who in his turn does not feel vexed with his fellow-creatures, and who is free from delight and envy, perturbation and fear, is dear to Me. ( 15 )

Realizing the presence of God everywhere, the devotee can never deliberately cause suffering, agony, fear and perturbation to anyone; on the other hand, he is naturally inclined to render good offices to all, and to promote their best interests. Hence no one should ever feel annoyed with him. If anyone ever feels vexed with him through some error, it is the evil propensities of that individual in the shape of likes and dislikes and jealousy etc., born of ignorance, that are mainly responsible for the feeling of vexation, and not the devotee himself. For the God-realized devotee, who is the very embodiment of compassion and love, and who is naturally disposed to do good to all, can never be a source of annoyance to anyone.

oneness towards all. Therefore, he does not deliberately and of his own initiative behave in such a way as to provoke ill-will in others. That is why others too do not as a rule behave in a way which causes annoyance to him. Nonetheless, it cannot be asserted without fear of contradiction that no other being can ever be a source of bodily or mental suffering to him. Therefore, it should be definitely understood that the enlightened devotee too may under force of Prārabdha have occasions of sorrow and suffering at others' hands, but being completely free from likes and dislikes, he does not feel perturbed even in the face of the greatest calamity ( VI. 22 ). That is why the enlightened devotee never feels annoyed with any being whatsoever.

Again, the enlightened devotee who has realized God develops the feeling of

The first half of the verse merely says that the devotee does not feel

annoyed or offended with any other being. Although this shuts out in his case the possibility of annoyance caused by another, it does not preclude the contingency of his feeling perturbed over an incident, or annoyed with an object, of his own seeking or with which he may be confronted without his seeking. Therefore, by reiterating in the second line the fact of his being free from perturbation, the Lord indicates that His devotee is never subject to any form of annoyance whatsoever.

Contact with an agreeable object sends a thrill into the body and excites a pleasurable sensation in the mind; while that with a disagreeable one causes irritation and annoyance. Thus, even though the absence of delight and perturbation itself is an indication of the devotee being free from all morbid feelings, it does not clearly bring out their total absence. Hence in order to make it definitely clear that the devotee is entirely free from all emotions, the Lord adds that he is free from envy and fear as well.

In fact, just as a man feels delighted on attaining the objects of his desire such as honour, fame, wealth etc., so should he feel delighted to see others obtaining those very objects in the same or even a greater measure than himself. But, instead of feeling delighted in such cases, people generally entertain a feeling of envy towards them. Even sensible men are found obsessed with this feeling. Similarly, contact with objects repugnant to one's liking as well as to the canons of morality and virtue is seen causing annoyance; while contact or even the possibility of contact with objects which, though consistent with morality and virtue, are yet conducive to sorrow and suffering is seen causing fear. To say nothing of others, fear of death overtakes even sensible men. The enlightened devotee of God, however, comes to realize the presence of God everywhere and recognizes all activities as a pastime of God; hence he is no longer subject to envy, perturbation or fear. This is what is meant by characterizing him as free from envy, perturbation and fear.

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ १६ ॥

यः who; अनपेक्षः wanting nothing; शुचिः pure (both internally and externally); दक्षः clever; उदासीनः impartial; गतव्यथः free from distractions; सः that; सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी renouncing the feeling of doership in all undertakings; मद्भक्तः My devotee; मे to Me; प्रियः (is) dear.

He who wants nothing, who is both internally and externally pure, is clever and impartial, and has risen above all distractions, and who renounces the feeling of doership in all undertakings,—that devotee of Mine is dear to Me. (16)

The devotee who has realized God has absolutely no concern with any object whatsoever, that is why he does not entertain even the least desire, craving, or hidden bias for anything. He gets satiated. This is what is meant by speaking of him as 'Anapekṣah'.

It may be contended here that no activity of any kind is possible in the absence of any desire or want, and without activity one cannot keep his body and soul together. How, then, does a devotee live? Our reply to this question is that activity is possible even in the

absence of desire or want under the impulse of Prārabdha or destiny; therefore, the life of a devotee is maintained by his Prārabdha. That is to say, the mind, speech and body of the devotee continue to perform all their functions automatically under the impulse of his Prārabdha without any desire, craving or volition on his part (IV. 19). Hence the maintenance of his body presents no difficulty.

Purity finds its highest expression in the devotee. His mind, intellect, senses and body etc. become so pure that his very sight and touch lend purity to others, to say nothing of those who converse with him. The place where such a devotee resides attains a holy character; nay, the whole atmosphere and surroundings of the place, including land and water etc., are hallowed by his presence.

True cleverness lies in accomplishing the object for the realization of which human birth has been vouchsafed to us. The attainment of the primary object of human life consists in realizing God, the supreme lover, universal friend and Lord of the universe, through the practice of exclusive devotion. The enlightened devotee has been declared as 'clever' only in order to show that he has realized God.

Partiality consists in giving false evidence in a court of law, delivering an unjust award in the capacity of an arbitrator or judge while adjudging or sitting in judgment over a dispute, or attempting

in any other way to benefit or harm unduly one of the two contending parties out of regard for a kinsman, relative or friend, or out of malice or any other consideration. He who is free from such partiality is said to be 'impartial'.

The use of the adjectival compound 'Gatavyathah' is intended to convey that the devotee does not feel distracted even when he has reason to feel distracted; that is to say, his mind does not give way to anxiety, sorrow or grief in any form or shape. The intention is to show that the devotee does, as a result of his Prārabdha, undergo sorrows and sufferings in the shape of a bodily ailment or loss of wife, children, house and wealth etc.; but notwithstanding all this, his mind remains unperturbed.

Whatever is happening in the world is a part of the divine play; it is the play of the deluding potency of God known as Māyā. He gets whomsoever He chooses to do whatever and whenever He likes. Man falsely arrogates to himself the credit for a particular action, and claims certain powers etc. A devotee of God, however, comes to realize this truth; hence he ever conceives himself to be a puppet in His hands. He gladly plays whatever part the Lord desires him to play at a particular moment. Nursing not even the least taint of egoism within himself, he does nothing at all of his own accord. Hence, while doing everything in the eyes of the world, he is really a 'Sarvārambhaparityāgi' inasmuch as he is free from the feeling of doership in respect of all his undertakings.

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।

शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान् यः स मे प्रियः ॥ १७ ॥

यः who; न never; हृष्यति rejoices; न nor; द्वेष्टि hates; न nor; शोचति grieves; न nor again; काङ्क्षति desires; यः (and) who; शुभाशुभपरित्यागी (is) a relinquisher of both good and evil actions; सः that; भक्तिमान् man full of devotion; मे to Me; प्रियः (is) dear.

He who neither rejoices nor hates, nor grieves, nor desires, and who renounces both good and evil actions and is full of devotion, is dear to Me. ( 17 )

Attainment of a desired object and the parting of that which is unwelcome bring joy to all beings. Hence the negation of rejoicing here means the negation of joy resulting from the attainment of a desired object and from the parting of that which is unwelcome. The words 'Yo na hr̥ṣyati' are, therefore, intended to convey that the enlightened devotee never experiences joy on any account. To such a devotee, God alone, who is all-powerful, all-sustaining and supremely compassionate, is the highest object of love; and such a God stands ever realized by him. He is, therefore, ever immersed in supreme bliss. He does not entertain the least attraction or aversion for anything in this world. Thus there is nothing agreeable or disagreeable in his eyes and hence there can be no question of his feeling delighted on the attainment of a desired object and the disappearance of an unwelcome one.

Again, a devotee of God recognizes the entire universe as identical with God; hence he can never and on no account nurse any grudge against any being or object whatsoever. The feeling of hatred totally disappears from his mind once for all.

As from joy, the devotee of God is immune from the feeling of grief as well. The attainment of an unwelcome object and the loss of that which is agreeable causes grief to all. The devotee of God, however, views every dispensation of the supremely merciful and sportive Lord as full of His grace; hence it never appears unfavourable to him. Knowing as he does the secret of divine sport, he remains ever absorbed in the realization of His supremely blissful nature. How, then, can there be any grief to him ? Besides this God alone, who is all-pervading and

all-sustaining, is the best and dearest object of the devotee's heart; and he knows no separation from His Beloved; whereas the appearance and disappearance of worldly objects do not help or harm him in any way. That is further reason why he does not grieve over the loss of agreeable objects and contact with that which is unwelcome in the eyes of the world.

Man craves for those agreeable things which are missed by him. The devotee, having realized God, is eternally merged in supreme bliss and supreme repose, and is thus satiated. He never misses anything; all his wants disappear; and he gets established in an undisturbed state of mind. Hence there remains no reason for him to crave for worldly objects.

The word 'Śubha', forming part of the adjectival compound 'Śubhāśubhaparityāgi' stands for the performance of sacrifices, charity, penance and other activities enjoined by the Śāstras for the earning of one's livelihood and maintenance of the body according to one's grade in society and stage in life; while 'Aśubha' denotes sinful acts like telling a lie, practising duplicity, thieving, violence and adultery etc. The enlightened devotee of God renounces both these forms of action. For he offers to God all good actions performed through his body, senses and mind, and maintains not the least connection with them; nor does he entertain any attachment for such actions or the desire for their fruit. That is why such actions of his are not accounted as actions at all (IV. 20). And since he has no likes and dislikes, he is never guilty of sinful acts. Hence the Lord speaks of him as having relinquished both good and evil actions.

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।

शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥ १८ ॥

शत्रौ to foe; मित्रे to friend; च as well as; मानापमानयोः to honour and ignominy; समः (is) alike; च and; शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु to heat and cold, pleasure and pain (and other contrary experiences); समः (is) balanced; तथा and; सङ्गविवर्जितः (is) free from attachment.

He who is alike to friend and foe, as well as to honour and ignominy, who remains balanced in heat and cold, pleasure and pain and other contrary experiences, and is free from attachment, (18)

Inasmuch as the devotee bears no ill-will towards any creature whatsoever, there is no friend or foe in his eyes; yet people go the length of conceiving him as an enemy from their own point of view either because they foolishly imagine that he is doing them harm, or because his temperament does not appear agreeable to them, or because they bear jealousy towards him. Even so others regard him as a friend from their own point of view. But the devotee, who sees God everywhere throughout the universe, views all alike. There is no distinction of friend and foe in his eyes, and his conduct towards all is one of supreme love at all times. It becomes a part of his nature to serve all alike, regarding them as manifestations of God. Just as the tree makes no distinction between one who chops its limbs and another who waters its roots, and serves both equally with its shade, fruits and flowers etc., even so all distinctions disappear from the mind of the devotee. The undifferentiating attitude of the devotee is even superior to that of the tree. Since in the eyes of the devotee nothing exists apart from God, there is no room for differentiation in him. Hence he has been spoken of as alike to friend and foe.

Even though the devotee is alive to honour and ignominy, heat and cold, pleasure and pain, and other such agreeable or disagreeable experiences when his mind, senses and body go through such experiences, these latter do not at all arouse any morbid feelings in his mind

in the shape of attraction and aversion or joy and grief etc. He remains equipoised under all circumstances. He neither craves for the agreeable nor recoils from the disagreeable; he never loses his balance of mind under any circumstance even in the smallest degree. As he sees God everywhere, distinction totally disappears from his mind. It is with this idea that the devotee has been declared as balanced in all these contrary experiences.

Attachment or attraction for the world is the root of all evils. Even if a man externally gives up all connection with the world, but retains in his mind attachment for the same, such a renunciation cannot do him much good. On the other hand, when attachment has disappeared from the mind, there can be no harm even in maintaining, like King Janaka and others, outward connection with the world without entertaining the sense of possession and attachment with regard to the same. In fact, he alone who has thus got rid of attachment is 'Sangavivarjitah' in the real acceptance of the term. The same idea has been brought out in II. 57. Hence 'Sangavivarjitah' cannot be interpreted to mean one who has given up all connection with the world.

Verse 13 above speaks of the devotee as entertaining a friendly feeling towards all beings, whereas in the present verse he has been declared as free from attachment. Though these statements appear as mutually contradictory, in reality there is



no contradiction between them. The feeling of friendliness which the devotee bears towards all beings is devoid of attachment, and is faultless and unadulterated. The love of worldly-minded men is rooted in attachment. That is why the two statements smack of contradiction on the face of it, although there is no real contradiction. Friendliness is a virtue, and God Himself is endowed with the same; whereas attachment is a weakness, and being the root of all vices, it is worth giving up. How can such a weakness exist in a devotee of God ?

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिमौनी संतुष्टो येन केनचित् ।

अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥ १९ ॥

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिः taking praise and reproach alike; मौनी given to contemplation; येन केनचित् with anything and everything; संतुष्टः (is) contented; अनिकेतः (is) devoid of the feeling of ownership and attachment in respect of one's dwelling-place; स्थिरमतिः stable of mind; भक्तिमान् full of devotion; नरः (that) man; मे to Me; प्रियः (is) dear.

He who takes praise and reproach alike, and is given to contemplation and contented with any means of subsistence whatsoever, entertaining no sense of ownership and attachment in respect of his dwelling-place and full of devotion to Me, that man is dear to Me. (19)

A devotee of God does not entertain the least identification with, or the feeling of 'mine' in respect of his name or body. Therefore, he neither delights in praise nor laments over reproach; he entertains the same feeling towards both. Realizing the presence of God everywhere, he makes not the least distinction between those who praise him and those who reproach him. This is what is meant by his taking praise and reproach alike.

The word 'Mauni' ordinarily means one who observes a vow of silence. But silence does not consist in merely holding one's tongue. For man speaks not only through his organ of speech, he goes on speaking even through the mind. Ceaselessly dwelling on the objects of the senses is what is meant by speaking through the mind. The mind of the devotee gets so deeply absorbed in God that it thinks of nothing else than God; it is ever engrossed in His thought alone. This is silence in the real

sense of the term. He who abstains from speech, and yet goes on dwelling on the objects of the senses, practises only outward silence. Even external silence practised with the object of emptying the mind of worldly thoughts and purifying and controlling one's speech is profitable. But the present verse discusses the marks of the beloved devotee of God, whose speech is naturally flawless and restrained. Thus it cannot be said that he merely abstains from speech. On the other hand, the organ of speech of the devotee is almost incessantly engaged in chanting the names and glories of God, which is of supreme benefit to the world. Moreover, it is through His devotees that God propagates the cult of Devotion. Therefore, it cannot be conceived that the devotee who abstains from speech is dear to God, and not the one who makes use of his speech. In XVIII. 68 and 69 he who propagates the message of the Gītā is declared by the Lord as one who renders the dearest service to Him. This noble mission cannot be

undertaken by one who abstains from speech. Besides this, 'Mauna' appears once more in XVII, 16 as 'forming part of mental penance. Had the word 'Mauna' been intended by the Lord to mean abstinence from speech, He would have mentioned it under the head of vocal penance. But He has not done so. This also proves that the word 'Mauna' denotes here silence of the mind, which is the characteristic of a Muni (sage). And he who is characterized by this qualification of a Muni is a Maunī, or one given to contemplation. Abstinence from speech can be practised even wilfully, hence it is of no great importance either. Hence the word 'Mauna' should be interpreted here to mean the habit of contemplation, rather than abstinence from speech. Restraint of speech is naturally implied in this habit.

It is but natural and reasonable that the devotee who is exclusively devoted to contemplation on God, and whose mind is never crossed by any other thought, should not undertake any activity for the maintenance of his body, and that it is God alone who personally attends even to his worldly requirements and safeguards his worldly interests. Nevertheless, the words 'Yena Kenachit Santuṣṭaḥ' used with reference to the devotee do not imply that he abstains from disinterested and lawful activity for the maintenance of his body according to his grade in society and stage in life. They simply mean that the devotee remains contented with whatever he obtains as a result of such activity according to his Prārabdha or destiny. As a matter of fact, a devotee of God has nothing to do with the acquisition or loss of worldly objects. Having realized his most beloved Deity, he remains ever satisfied. Therefore, the intention of the words 'Yena Kenachit Santuṣṭaḥ' appears to be that the acquisition and loss of external objects cause no difference in his contentment. He remains reconciled to whatever he gets according

to his Prārabdha, no matter whether it gives him pleasure or pain.

He who has no house of his own is called 'Aniketa'. The word, therefore, primarily refers to those devotees of God who have renounced the life of a householder and adopted the life of a Sannyāsi or recluse. It also refers to those other devotees who, having offered all their possessions to God, have become wholly destitute, whose house and other immovable property, wealth and power, learning and intellect, have all reverted to God, no matter whether they are celebrities, householders or hermits. Just as an enlightened soul, who has no feeling of identification with or attachment to his body, nor regards it as his own, is called bodiless (videha) even though possessed of a body, in the same way he who has no attachment to his dwelling and does not regard it as his own is 'Aniketa' or without a dwelling even though living under a roof.

Due to his having realized God, all the doubts of a devotee disappear root and branch and he comes to have unwavering faith in Him. His resolve is firm and unshakable. Therefore, like ordinary men, he never turns away either from virtue or from God under the influence of morbid feelings like lust, anger, greed, infatuation and fear etc. That is why he has been spoken of as 'Sthiramatiḥ (stable of mind). For further light on the implication of this word the reader is referred to the commentary on II. 55 to 72.

While discussing the marks of His beloved devotees in five groups in verses 13 to 19 above, the Lord repeats the assurance 'such a devotee is dear to Me' each time. In this connection it should be noted that all the marks discussed in the above verses are marks of the devotees of God, and they are all in agreement with the scriptures and highly commendable; but it is quite natural that the virtues

and conduct even of devotees may slightly differ owing to the difference in their temperament etc. All the marks are not common to each and every devotee. Even-mindedness and tranquillity are no doubt common to all, and none of them is subject to morbid feelings like attraction and aversion, joy and grief etc. That is why we find some repetition in the above verses. A careful examination, however, will reveal that the feelings of attraction and aversion, as well as of joy and grief, have been negated either expressly or by implication in all the five groups. In the very first group 'Adweṣṭā' negates aversion, 'Nirmamaḥ' rules out attraction, and 'Samaduhkhasukhaḥ' eliminates joy and grief. The second group negates the feelings of joy, anger, fear and perturbation; this automatically eliminates attraction and aversion as well as joy and grief. In the third group, 'Anapekṣaḥ' rules out attraction, 'Udāsinah' negates aversion, and 'Gatavyathah' eliminates joy and grief. In the fourth group 'Na Kāṅkṣati' negates attraction, 'Na Dweṣṭi' eliminates aversion, and 'Na Hrīyati Na Śochati' rule out joy and grief. Similarly, in the fifth or last group 'Sangavivarjitah' and 'Santuṣṭah' negate attraction and aversion respectively and 'Śitoṣṇasukhaduhkheṣu Samaḥ' eliminates joy and grief. The word 'Santuṣṭah' too occurs twice in this context. This proves that immunity from morbid feelings like attraction and aversion, joy and grief, etc., on the one hand, and the presence of positive virtues like even-mindedness and tranquillity, on the other, are indispensable in all cases. Other characteristics may slightly differ due to difference in the temperament of the devotee. It is because of this variation that the Lord has classified the devotees into five different categories and discussed their marks separately. He who possesses all the marks of even one of these groups is a devotee dear to the Lord.

Careful thought will reveal that the marks discussed in these verses are not

the marks of those treading the path of Devotion, but of those perfect souls who have realized God through the practice of Devotion. For, in the first place, these marks have been discussed only after enunciating the means of God-Realization and its reward; and, secondly, they are analogous to the marks of saints who have transcended the Guṇas and realized the Truth, described in XIV. 22 to 25. Hence they cannot be treated as the marks of those who are yet on the way to God-Realization.

x                      x                      x

The chapter deals with the Yoga of devotion; that is why it has been given the title of Bhaktiyoga. Arjuna's query and the Lord's reply thereto both deal with the subject of worship, and it is for this very reason that the Lord repeats the dictum 'Such a devotee of Mine is dear to Me'. This leads us to the conclusion that the marks mentioned in the above verses are the marks of those who have attained highest perfection through the practice of devotion.

It may be asked here: Does any line of demarcation continue to exist between those who have attained highest perfection through the path of Action, Devotion or Knowledge? Our reply to this question is that although their actual state of realization or the supreme Truth realized by them is just the same, their conduct may continue to vary due to difference in their temperament. The statement of the Lord that "Even the wise man behaves in conformity with his own nature" (III. 33) also proves that the conduct and disposition of all wise men continue to differ even after their enlightenment.

x                      x                      x

Absence of egoism and the sense of possession and immunity from the morbid feelings of attraction and aversion, joy and grief, lust and anger, etc., which are all born of ignorance, and the presence of even-mindedness and supreme tranquillity are found equally in all God-realized souls; but friendliness and compassion are the distinctive marks of the noble soul

who has realized God through the path of Devotion. Even so indifference towards the world, towards one's own body and towards activity in general is a special characteristic of saints who have realized the supreme state by following the path of Knowledge. Similarly, activity without attachment and with due emphasis on self-control is the characteristic mark of those who have realized God through the practice of Karmayoga.

The marks of the saint who has realized God through the practice of Karmayoga have been discussed in a number of verses commencing from verse 55 and ending with verse 72 of Chapter II; the marks of the God-realized soul who has transcended the Guṇas through the path of Knowledge appear in XIV. 22 to 25; and verses 13 to 19 of the present chapter describe the marks of the soul who has realized God by treading the path of Devotion.

*Describing thus the marks of the perfect devotee who has realized God, the Lord now extols, as extremely dear to Him, those devotees who, endowed with supreme faith and the spirit of self-surrender, most diligently and scrupulously cultivate those qualities as model virtues, and thus concludes His reply to Arjuna's query contained in the opening verse of this chapter.*

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।

अद्धाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥ २० ॥

तु but; ये who; अद्धानाः endowed with faith; मत्परमाः solely devoted to Me; इदम् this; यथोक्तम् set forth above; धर्म्यामृतम् nectar of pious wisdom; पर्युपासते partake of in a disinterested way; ते those; भक्ताः devotees; मे to Me; अतीव extremely; प्रियाः dear.

Those devotees, however, who partake in a disinterested way of this nectar of pious wisdom set forth above, endowed with faith and solely devoted to Me, they are extremely dear to Me. ( 20 )

Verses 13 to 19 above discuss the marks of the perfect devotee who has realized God; whereas the present verse extols those noble devotees who are yet on the way to God-Realization, and are thus different from the God-realized devotee, and who cultivate the above-mentioned qualities of the latter as model virtues. It is this distinction which is intended to be brought out by the indeclinable 'Tu'.

The word 'Śraddadhānāḥ' stands for those who have reverent faith in the descents and utterances of the all-pervad-

ing and all-powerful Lord, as well as in His virtues, glory, supernatural power and stories etc., as in something directly perceived by his senses. And those who look upon the most loving and compassionate Lord as their highest goal and supreme refuge, nay, the very prop of their life and their all-in-all, are referred to here as 'Matparamāḥ'.

x x x

Really speaking, the marks of the God-realized devotee described in the foregoing seven verses constitute the true religion of humanity. The fulfilment of human existence lies in following the

ideal of these devotees; for by following their ideal the practisant is freed for ever from the cruel grasp of death and succeeds in realizing God, who is immortality itself. It is in order to bring out this idea that the above marks of the devotee have been spoken of as Dharmyāmṛta or the 'nectar of pious wisdom'.

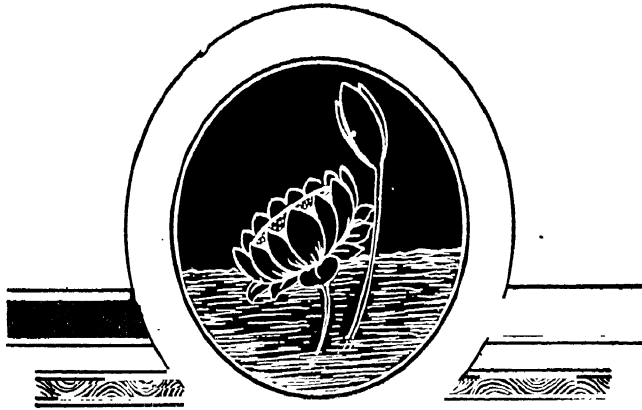
x x x

The perfect devotee who has realized God is naturally endowed with the above attributes and becomes eternally one with Him. Hence the presence of these virtues in him is not to be wondered at. But it is really wonderful that those faithful devotees who have not yet realized God should nevertheless pin their faith in

Him and solely depend on Him, offering with supreme reverence their body, mind, wealth and all other possessions to Him, nay, should remain constantly engaged in His loving remembrance with no other motive than His realization and should unceasingly endeavour to mould their life according to the above model. That is why such devotees are exceptionally dear to Him. God remains indebted to such loving devotees till He has satisfied them by conferring on them the privilege of constant association with Him: such is His esteem for these devotees. It is, therefore, but reasonable that the Lord should declare such devotees as even 'dearer' than the God-realized devotee.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे  
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे भक्तियोगो नाम  
द्वादशोऽध्यायः ॥ १२ ॥

*Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of  
Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue  
between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends  
the twelfth chapter entitled  
"The Yoga of Devotion".*



# The Gita and Spiritual Life\*

~~~~~ By Sri Arabinda Basu, M. A.

The Gītā is an inexhaustible treasure-house of spiritual wisdom. Generations before us have gathered, as much as they could, sparkling gems of spiritual thought from this great and unique poem, the lustre of which has lighted up their path to life's *summum bonum*. Countless generations after us will attain to Peace and Felicity by following its teaching. It is not without reason that its message has reached distant shores, has given solace and encouragement to many a drooping soul and has shown them the royal road to That "which is the greatest of all gains and the treasure beside which all lose their value, wherein established he is not disturbed by the fiercest assault of mental grief." (*Gītā* VI. 22.)† The Gītā is one of the greatest synthetic works in the long history of Indian spiritual thought. Diverse streams of philosophical knowledge and spiritual discipline commingle and become one in the Gītā. This is proved by the fact that all the Āchāryas have commented upon it and claimed it as an authority for their philosophy of life. This is not to say, however, that the Gītā is eclectic in its method and conclusion. Its method is not to take up different theories, examine and improve upon them where found wanting, and then to absorb them in its own doctrine. That is the method of a text-book of philosophy. But the Gītā is an inspired spiritual poem. The

truth of the matter is that the teaching of the Gītā is so vast and harmonious that the essentials of most other systems of thought and life constitute partial aspects of it.

For a proper understanding of the scripture a consideration of three things is essential—the speaker, the person spoken to and the occasion of the teaching. The speaker is God Himself, Arjuna is the disciple, and the occasion is the great battle of Kurukṣetra. There is a way of looking at the *Mahābhārata* as an allegory and the Gītā as only symbolic. It is said that Kṛṣṇa represents God, Arjuna is Jiva; Kurukṣetra is the mind and heart of man; the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the passions to be conquered or the powers of evil to be subdued; and the Pāṇḍavas and their army, the pious tendencies and the forces of good favourable to and necessary for liberation. This reading gives the *Mahābhārata*, admittedly one of the three or four greatest epics in the world, a very low place in the realm of poetry and also robs the Gītā of much of its force and significance and also its value for the common man, for whom it is primarily meant. We cannot enter here into the question of the historicity of the Kurukṣetra battle; but it may be mentioned briefly that great scholars have argued that there are historical evidences of it. Also the Gītā is symbolic only in

* This article grew out of a lecture delivered on the occasion of the Gītā-Jayanti celebrated by the Gita Samity, Benares Hindu University.

† Translations of the verses of the Gītā quoted in this article are taken from *The Message of the Gītā* by Anilbaran Roy (George Allen and Unwin Ltd. London).

this sense that its teaching is universal and its message eternal, and that there is very little in it which is merely local or temporal.

The teacher of the Gītā is Kṛṣṇa, whom the Hindu scriptures declare to be God Himself; in the Gītā Kṛṣṇa declares Himself as God. He is the incarnate Divine who, assuming the body human, plays a great divine game by adopting the physical, mental and spiritual characteristics of man. Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of Yoga, a great leader of action and a man of the world at the same time, an empire-builder, a fighter, a statesman and a spiritual teacher—all in one. He is the complete and perfect man, Puruṣottama, which is another name for the embodied Godhead.

The Gītā is addressed to Arjuna, a great man of action, a Kṣatriya prince who is the hero of a hundred battles and an ally of the gods. He is Kṛṣṇa's dearest friend and closest associate; their relation is free and frank; and the emotion that Arjuna entertains for his Divine Friend and charioteer is love and not awe. Arjuna is particularly fit to receive the teaching of the Gītā. For one who has not shown, developed and tested his abilities and heroism in the world of action cannot properly receive its message. But rather one who has taken up a great work the accomplishment of which presents great obstacles, one who has acquired spiritual power and energy in trying to succeed in one's great mission, to such a one God reveals the knowledge for the successful end and consummation of the work. Arjuna is pre-eminently such a man; he has for long satisfied the Rajasic tendencies of a Kṣatriya prince, yet he has through supreme self-control subordinated his natural Vṛttis

to high Sattvic ideals and has made them Sattva-directed.

Arjuna enters the battle-field happy and confident. But at the most critical moment of his life his spirit is depressed and his intellect confused by the conflicting teachings of the different scriptures, *Śruti-vipratīpannā*. He cannot decide about the norm of conduct to be followed and approaches Kṛṣṇa for guidance. He takes refuge in the Lord and prays to be enlightened. The Divine Friend becomes the Divine Master. Arjuna is the representative man of his age and typical of the human soul in agony athirst for Light and illumination.

The situation in which the Gītā is spoken is the terrible holocaust of Kurukṣetra. Two mighty armies are arrayed against each other, sombre war music is being played, great conch-shells have been sounded, even arms have been hurled, *pravṛtte śāstra-sampāte*. Just at this moment the hero of the whole action loses heart and refuses to fight. The setting and the situation are highly significant. The teaching of the Gītā has a direct bearing upon a great practical crisis in the application of ethics and spirituality in human life. A great body of the profoundest teachings must have for its occasion an extraordinary happening or crisis of deep suggestion and hazardous difficulty which cannot be governed sufficiently well by the normal standards of thought and action. The author of the Gītā reminds us again and again of the situation from which the teaching arises; he returns to it prominently not only at the end but also in the middle of the deepest philosophical discussion. Thus the Gītā is not the scripture of the world-shunning ascetic, but of the practical man

in spiritual distress who is sincere and earnest to get Divine guidance. It is the layman's unfailing light-house in the dark night of the soul when he is drifting like a rudderless ship in the tumultuous sea of life. According to the Gītā, union with God comes not only in the peace and calm of a hermitage but also in the midst of mundane life. The Light illumines, the sweet but powerful Voice is heard, not only in the quiet of a mountain retreat but in the din and bustle of everyday existence and even, as in Arjuna's case, in a bloody battle-field.

A crisis like that of Arjuna is not an infrequent incident in our daily life. We are constantly afflicted by doubt and depression, are at a loss to know the real values of life and to decide on the means of realizing them. These are the moments when we most need spiritual guidance. The voice of God alone can help us and not the vanity of intelligence and genius that we call knowledge. Let us search our own Heart and try to listen to the voice of the Lord seated there. Let us approach Him in all humility and reverence and accept Him as the Divine Teacher. Let us tell Him like Arjuna *Śiṣyaste'ham śādhī māṁ tvām prapannam*—I take refuge as a disciple with Thee, enlighten me (*Gītā* II. 7). The inner guide is sure to show us the path. In fact, He has already even outwardly spoken the word. The Gītā is a great solace, help and path-finder; and what is the Gītā but the living word of the Incarnate Divine, who is also the Friend and Master of creatures ?

The problem of the Gītā is to show a way by which a life of action can be reconciled with a life in God. It is true

that Arjuna as a practical man wanted only a clear-cut direction as to his duty, a definite principle according to which he should conduct himself. But the problem of duty is very deep, complex and perplexing—*gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ*. Spirit being the fundamental Reality, life can only be its manifestation. Truth of life depends on the truth of the Source of life. A problem in life must ultimately have a spiritual solution. "It is only by a change of consciousness that the true basis of life can be discovered; from within outward is indeed the rule. But within does not mean some quarter inch behind the surface. One must go deep and find the soul, the Self, the Divine Reality within us."* We must "stand back and seek the Light within till we discover and build the Godhead within and without us."† It is only natural, therefore, that Kṛṣṇa's answer to Arjuna's demand for a definition and direction of duty covers almost the whole range of spiritual philosophy and gives a spiritual solution. We shall see later that the Gītā does not teach, as it is commonly held, the disinterested performance of duties but the following of the divine life by abandoning all Dharmas and taking refuge in God alone. "The Gītā is not a book of practical ethics, but of the spiritual life."‡

Some systems of thought and life, however, make out that spiritual life has no place for works or Karma. They say that Karma being a force of ignorance, *avidyā*, there is a fundamental conflict between action and knowledge. Jñāna or

*† From a letter of Sri Aurobindo. See Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual 1945 (Calcutta), p. 6.

‡ Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gītā*, 1st Series (1937), p. 45.

knowledge is lauded as the only means of attaining Brahma-intuition. A particular view of Reality is responsible for giving Karma this ignominious position. Take, for example, the Māyāvādī's conception of Reality and the world. Reality of the Māyāvādī Vedantist is a spaceless and timeless Absolute, without any feature, quality or action. It is the *niṣkriyā, nirguṇa* Parabrahma. The world is a creation of Māyā, which, if not altogether non-existent, is ultimately unreal. We ourselves and the world are real only in time and once we get into a true knowledge of Brahma all this turns out to be not abidingly or truly real but a myth of Māyā, *mithyā*. If this is the philosophy we accept, if this is the Reality we seek to realize, then there is no doubt that Karma is an obstacle in our path, and the call of the forest becomes the most potent call. For the purpose of life in this view is to deny life. The Gītā, however, has a different conception of the relation of knowledge and action and does not teach any fundamental conflict between them. "Children speak of Sāṅkhya and Yoga as apart from each other, not the wise; if a man applies himself integrally to one, he gets the fruit of both. The status which is attained by the Sāṅkhya, to that the men of Yoga also arrive; who sees Sāṅkhya and Yoga as one, he sees."* It is obvious that for this philosophy of action to be true we must have a different picture of Reality. For if Reality is energyless and actionless, works can only have the status the Māyāvādī assigns to it. But the Gītā has a different conception of the ultimate One and does

not consider the static Brahma to be the only or even the highest Reality.

"There are two Puruṣas (spiritual beings) in this world, the immutable (and impersonal) and the mutable (and personal); the mutable is all these existences, the Kūṭastha (the high-seated consciousness of the Brahmic status) is called the immutable. But other than these two is that highest spirit called the Supreme Self, who enters into the three worlds and upbears them, the imperishable Lord. Since I am beyond the mutable and am greater and higher even than the immutable, in the world and the Veda, I am proclaimed as the Puruṣottama." (Gītā XV. 16-18.)

In the above three verses the Gītā clearly makes out that the Akṣara is only an aspect of the complete and total Reality, which transcends and yet contains the Kṣara and the Akṣara. We have to remember that in the whole the Puruṣa or Self is one,—there is one Spirit who is the ground and support of the universal play, and not many. In the individual, however, the one Puruṣa has three aspects. "He is one but triple—*trivṛt*."

The Kṣara is the soul in Nature enjoying her sweetness, while the Akṣara is the soul above Nature watching her and sanctioning her movements. But the Puruṣottama is the highest Self who possesses Nature and is the Lord of all. "He is the Soul one with God, one with All."

Thus the Akṣara, which is actionless, may be said to correspond to the Brahma of the Māyāvādī. But in the doctrine of the Gītā, as we have already said, it is not the highest status of Reality but only an aspect. The Akṣara is the Puruṣottama

* Gītā V. 4-5. That the Gītā means by Sāṅkhya and Yoga knowledge and action respectively is borne out by Gītā III. 3.

in His aspect of freedom from cosmic movement. In another place in the *Gītā* the Supreme Self is described as the foundation of Brahma, *Brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhā* (*Gītā* XIV. 27).

The Kṣara, on the other hand, is all creatures and existences. It is the soul caught in the universal movement of Nature and this is our normal self. But this is not the totality of our being. If it were so, there would be no meaning in the words *Mokṣa*, *Brahma-nirvāṇa*, *Brāhmī sthiti* etc. The Akṣara is our higher and the Puruṣottama our highest Self. Between the ephemeral, changing soul and the Highest Self stands the Immutable, not bound or affected but inalienably free, attaining to which we become detached and free from the subjection to Nature's eternal course of rounds. Established in that freedom and the consequent peace, we know ourselves to be eternal portions of the Divine—*mamaivāṃśaḥ sanātanaḥ* (*Gītā* XV. 7).

Granting that the above brief analysis of the *Gītā*'s doctrine of the three Puruṣas, or rather the One but triple Puruṣa, is correct, how does it affect the status of Karma? How does it justify its place in a perfect spiritual life? To do that it must be shown that there is a spiritual origin of Karma, that it arises from the very heart of Reality, that is, in other words, there is spiritual power and action. Our scripture has indeed got the same view. It is obvious that if Māyā, which is the unspiritual and unconscious energy, were the only kind of creative power, Karma could not have any final place in the spiritual life. Then there might indeed be spiritual realization but no spiritual life in the world. But the *Gītā* does not

accept Māyā as the sole creative power or even as the true creatrix of the world. A distinction is made between the Parā and the Aparā Prakṛti, the higher and the lower Nature. "The five elements (conditions of material being), mind (with its various senses and organs), reason, ego, this is my eightfold divided Nature. This is the lower. But know my other Nature different from this, O mighty-armed, the Supreme which becomes the Jīva and by which this world is upheld. Know this to be the womb of all beings. I am the birth of the whole world and so too its dissolution." (*Gītā* VII. 4-6.)

Thus the Aparā Prakṛti is the lower working and not the essential spiritual power of the Lord, of which it is the phenomenal expression. It is the Sāṅkhya Prakṛti of the three Guṇas, the workings of which are only changing modifications of reason, mind, sense, ego, life and matter. The self is attracted and held captive, as it were, by these apparently charming becomings and that is bondage. To be free, therefore, would mean for the self a severance of this "unholy" alliance and entering into Kaivalya or "Loneness". The Sāṅkhya stops here with the result that it sets up an unbridgeable gulf between the Self and Nature, between Being and Becoming. Consistent with this metaphysical position reflection, *Vichāra*, discrimination, *viveka*, in short, knowledge becomes the only means of liberation and Karma, the manifestation of Power and Energy, is renounced as the cause of bondage.*

* Whatever subtle metaphysical distinctions there may be between the Prakṛti and the Puruṣa of the Sāṅkhya, on the one hand, and between Māyā and Brahma of Śāṅkara Vedānta, on the other so far as the *Gītā*'s doctrine of spiritual

But the Gītā does not stop with this incurable antinomy. The Gītā's Highest Puruṣa is the Actor and therefore, for His acting to be possible, there must be a Power spiritual and free from the impurities of the Guṇas, a Power which manifests the Supreme as the One in all, but does not cut Him up into bits.

Such Power is the Parā Prakṛti, the infinite, eternal, self-conscious Nature of Puruṣottama. It is, in fact, identified with the Supreme, as is evident from the sixth verse of the seventh chapter of the Gītā quoted above. This Parā Prakṛti becomes the Jīva in order to provide a basis for manifestation in the world. Thus all existences are infused with the life of the Spirit. And though their frontal appearances are determined by the Aparā Prakṛti, their secret is held by the Parā and therefore by the Supreme. We now see the reconciliation of the two great sayings that the Parā Prakṛti becomes the Jīva and that the Jīva is an eternal portion of the Divine.

Now, what is the link between the lower and the higher Nature. The Gītā says it is the *swabhāva*, own nature of the Jīva. It is the primary determining law of the becoming of each Jīva, through which it is related to the original divine Becoming. The *swabhāva* is the pure and original quality of the phenomenal nature, though normally mixed up with the confused play of the qualities or Guṇas. Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to find and attain to his *swabhāva*, the inner and true law of his becoming, and mould his

life in accordance with it. Not to give up *Karma* but to make it *swabhāva*-governed, *swabhāva-niyātam karma*, is Kṛṣṇa's advice. Then begins the control of our actions by Īśwara instead of by the Guṇas of Nature. That is the only way of participating in the working of the Parā Prakṛti and therefore in the Nature of the Puruṣottama.

Above is given the metaphysical background of the Gītā's doctrine of the synthesis of Karma, Jñāna and Bhakti—Work, Knowledge and Love and Devotion. This exposition of the Ultimate Reality and His relation with His manifestation leaves ample scope—in fact, makes it imperative—for the three fundamental psychological functions of man to be harmonized and given a genuinely spiritual turning. Their main springs being in the Divine Nature, however confused and ignorant may be their actual working, they can certainly be spiritualized. In fact Kṛṣṇa's advice to Arjuna is to so spiritualize life's activities.

It is true that normally desire is the spring of action; it is *Vāsanā* that gives rise to Karma, which in its turn gives rise to *Vāsanā*, the mechanism of *Samskāra* and *Vṛtti* being the middle of the process. It is a vicious circle. And it is also true that freedom from desire is essential for the spiritual aspirant. But, says the Gītā, want of that freedom is not due to Karma as such but to our egoism and to our sense of agency. As our scripture says, *ahaṁkāra-vimūḍhātma kartāhamiti manyate*, he whose self is bewildered by egoism thinks 'I am the doer' (Gītā III. 27). But it is possible to be free from the clutches of egoism, which is an instrument of the lower nature and not our true self. We being essentially divine, the

life in the world is concerned—*ihaiva, prāk śarīravimokṣayāt*, emphasizes the Gītā—they are on a par with each other.

real foundation of our existence is above nature. While the external man is like a tree earth-bound heaven-amorous, the real man has his root in Heaven and has branched downwards. We must know that the actions are entirely done by the modes of Nature, *prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ* (*Gītā* III. 27). Here is the necessity of realizing the Akṣara Puruṣa, the immutable, silent witness of the workings of nature, unperturbed and unaffected, of becoming *triguṇātita*, above the three modes of nature, instead of being subject to them. Here also is the utility of knowledge which liberates us from false identification with the movements of nature.

The first discipline that the *Gītā* teaches for this realization is the renunciation of the fruits of action,—*Karmaṇye-vādhikāraste mā phaleṣu kadāchana*, you have a right to action, but only to action, never to its fruits (*Gītā* II. 47),—and surrendering them to God, the Master of work, as sacrifice. But later the *Gītā* says that we have not only no right to fruits of action, but not even to action itself. That also has to be dedicated to God and we have to look upon ourselves as instruments in his hands and not as agents. The resulting detachment from what are really currents of nature, but which we wrongly ascribed to ourselves, culminates in the knowledge of our self as something permanent, detached and self-gathered. But this is not the highest and complete realization, the consummation of our spiritual life, according to the *Gītā*. Puruṣottama is the Integral Reality and that has to be seen in everything and in every being simultaneously with seeing everything and every being in Him.

“He who sees Me everywhere and sees all in Me, to him I do not get lost, nor does he get lost to Me. The Yogī who has taken his stand upon oneness and loves Me in all beings, however and in all ways he lives and acts, lives and acts in Me.” (*Gītā* VI. 30.) This “Me” here is the Puruṣottama and Kṛṣṇa clearly speaks of loving Him. This constant living in God-consciousness and loving Him in all beings is the crown of the Yoga of the *Gītā*. Love and devotion to the Divine is the supreme teaching of our scripture. Thus are synthetized the three ways of Karma, Jñāna and Bhakti. “The first step is Karmayoga, the selfless sacrifice of works. The second is Jñānayoga, the self-realization and knowledge of the true nature of the world and here the insistence is on knowledge. But the sacrifice of works continues and the path of works becomes one with, but does not disappear into, the path of knowledge. The last is Bhaktiyoga, adoration and seeking of the Supreme Self as the Divine Being, and here the insistence is on devotion but the knowledge is not subordinated but only raised, vitalized and fulfilled and still the sacrifice of works continues, the double path becomes the triune way of knowledge, work and devotion.”* And what is the fruit of the sacrifice that the seeker gets? It is the one end supremely attainable—union with the Divine Being and oneness with the Divine Nature.

Karmayoga is ordinarily taken to mean a moral discipline necessary for the purpose of *chittaśuddhi*, purification of mind and

* Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gītā*, 1st Series (1937), p. 59.

heart. It consists, as has been said above, of renunciation of the fruits of action and then of action itself, surrendering them to God, the Master of works, as sacrifice and attaining freedom from the sense of agency or doer. In this view, the function of Karma is only preliminary. But the true import of Karmayoga in the Gītā is the work done after union with the Supreme Self as His instrument. Karmayoga is not merely a moral effort but a spiritual fruition, not only a beginning but also a consummation. The Gītā definitely makes enlightened work not merely a supremely potent means of God-union but also the expression of such union. In fact, our scripture, though recognizing the way of *Sannyāsa*, of outward physical renunciation of life and action, prefers action to inaction (*Gītā* III. 4). And the command has been given to Arjuna: *Yogasthaḥ Kuru Karmāṇi*. We have of course to remember the last half of the line—*sangam tyaktvā Dhanāñjaya*. Kṛṣṇa says, fixed in Yoga do your actions, having abandoned attachment (*Gītā* II. 48). It is needless to say that one cannot become Yogastha unless one is completely detached, fully free from attachment of any kind. But what is this detachment that Kṛṣṇa speaks of ? It is not only the detachment from particular objects of desire but also from psychological preferences and aversions. For in the previous verse Kṛṣṇa, after telling Arjuna that he has no right to the fruits of action, and therefore not to make fruits of works his motives, emphatically says—*mā te sango'stu ākarmaṇi*—let there be not in you any attachment to inactivity (*Gītā* II. 47). Thus detachment from action does not mean attachment to inaction. On the contrary, the Yogī will see the

One in all pairs of opposites, in friend and foe, love and hate, gain and loss, victory and defeat, honour and insult, action and inaction. For *samatvam Yoga uchyate*: it is even-mindedness that is meant by Yoga (*Gītā* II. 48). In fact, it is the liberated Yogī who has any Karma worth the name and not ordinary people being driven intermittently by the hurrys of Nature. We have said above that the Yogī not only realizes unity with God but also oneness with His Nature. And since Kṛṣṇa of Himself says, "O son of Prthā, I have no work that I need to do in all the three worlds; I have nothing that I have not gained and have yet to gain and I abide verily in the paths of action" (*Gītā* III. 22), the devotee who has love and devotion for God and exalts himself to the divine nature will not want to retire from His cosmic play, though that possibility is open to the Yogī, but he will become a *nimitta*, an instrument in His hands for the great purpose of holding together the peoples. Or it may be for any other purpose that God may be fulfilling in the world.

It may be asked: why should the Yogī, who has no desire and ambition, work ? What will be the motive of his work ? The question arises from the wrong notion that desire alone can be the motive of work. True, the Yogī has no personal desire; but that is precisely why he can identify his will with the supreme Will. And when one is not propelled to work by desire but inspired to work by God's example, then alone may one be said to work. Not the Nature-driven but the God-appointed is truly a worker. "Free from desire and attachment, one with all

beings, living in the infinite Truth and Purity and out of the profoundest depth of his inner being, governed by his immortal, divine and highest self, all his works will be directed by the Power within through that essential nature in us which knowing, warring, working, loving, serving is always divine, towards the fulfilment of God in this world.* While on the ethical level there are works and works, on the spiritual level, in the Yoga of divine works, there is no distinction between works. All works, *Sarvakarmāṇi*, can be done as a sacrifice to the Lord and Master of works. From the other side, God can appoint His devotee to any work,—however undivine it may seem to the half-blind knowledge of man. It is not the work that matters but the spirit behind it which determines its character. Kṛṣṇa clearly says to Arjuna: *mām anusmara yudhya cha*, at all times remember Me and fight (*Gītā* VIII. 7). Fighting and bloodshed is not unspiritual and undivine necessarily. On the other hand, a perfect devotee, free from egoism and the sense of agency and knowing that all initiative for work comes ultimately from the Supreme Worker, who is in constant union with God and shares in His work as an instrument, will be equally at home—and his home is divine consciousness—in crowd and solitude, in a battle-field or in a *Śāntarasāspadam āśramam*. No difference can remain for him who sees the One in all beings and becomings, whose vision of equality cannot be clouded by the seemingly contradictory nature of the pairs of opposites.

This raises the topical problem of non-violence. That subject is vast and important enough to require independent treatment, but we will say a few words about it before completing the present essay. It is supposed by some critics—obviously ignorant of the mysteries of spiritual matters—that Kṛṣṇa could not ask Arjuna to take up arms and fight, because that militates against *their* moral sense. These critics prefer to take the whole matter as an allegory and thus want to save Kṛṣṇa and the *Gītā* from moral depravity! But we said in the beginning that the *Gītā* is a scripture of the spiritual life and anybody who knows anything about spirituality knows that it goes far beyond ethics: and that is why its expression in the affairs of the world is not bound to be what ordinary men consider to be moral.

Non-violence means non-injury. It is, however, not a negative concept but a positive one. It indicates—at least should indicate—not only the absence of immoral tendencies to harm our fellow-beings but also the presence of universal love. Non-violence is a matter of inner consciousness and not of outer behaviour. Now, is non-violence a spiritual principle or merely moral? In other words, is non-violence a natural result of spiritual realization or only an ethical discipline to be practised as a preliminary to such realization? If it is the former, that is, a spiritual principle, it is obvious that only a person of genuine spiritual realization can develop it. Freedom from egoism and passion and non-attachment—these are essential for genuine spiritual realization, in which, as has been already said, everything is actually seen as God and in God and also God

* Śrī Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Arya, Vol. VI., p. 210.

in and as everything. Transcendence of the natural order of things is both a presupposition and a natural corollary of self-realization and God-union. And, therefore, to a Yogi Nature is an open book and he knows the essential principles of her working. And what is Nature but the external executive force of the supreme Will? A Yogi knows that Nature works through apparent opposites, the principle of strife and struggle is as much an instrument of Nature as that of love and association. Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself to Arjuna as Time, the Destroyer and Lord of Death—I am the Time-spirit, destroyer of the world (*Gītā* XI. 32). So that the Yogi will see the self-same God's Power in all movements of Nature, because unity is his vision. And if he is a Karmayogi, participating in God's play in the world, he will not shrink from slaughter and bloodshed in order to save his skin or himself from nervous shock or to satisfy his moral sensibility. Morality represents a stage of duality, a struggle between the actual and the ideal. But the Karmayogi gifted with the vision of unity knows ideals and actuals to be lower reflections of the Real; he also knows that through the actualities of Nature, however apparently contradictory to the ideals, these latter are realized. Nature's ways cannot be comprehended by man's puny intellect and her onward march does not stop in deference to his touchy and unenlightened morality.

If, on the other hand, non-violence is only an ethical formula, it cannot have a universal application. Morality is determined by many factors like the station in life and the mental constitution of the agent, the development and capacities of his

nature, and the situation in which he is placed. Ahimsā is a great ideal, but Hindu teachers have never committed the mistake of making any ethical ideal and discipline imperative for everybody. They have always believed in—and recommended—graded ideals and, conformably with them, in progressive practices. What is permissible for a responsible and peaceful citizen of the society with a developed social conscience is forbidden for a robber. But the converse also is true. What is good for the robber is not necessarily good for the ethically more developed family-man with responsibilities towards his family, who does not go out of his way to assault others. Therefore, when he is assaulted, he has every right to defend himself against the aggressive adversary; and, if successful defence necessitates the killing of the aggressor, no sin attaches to the defendant who has been wronged. On this point, all Aryan teachers are unanimous, including the Buddha, the Prophet of Maitri and Karuṇā, and Chaitanya, the Prophet of Prema.

It is pointed out that to change the heart of the evil-doer a supreme sacrifice has to be made. This is a dangerous doctrine, because it makes people responsible for what is not their job. My business is not to perfect others but to perfect myself. Who am I to change other people's heart when I am myself ignorant and bound? And where is the power by which I shall perform the miracle? Conversions like those of Jagāi and Madhāi do take place—and they are the reminders of the power of spiritual love. —But how many spiritual geniuses DONATED BY like Nityānanda? Perhaps one in a million.

Lt. PADMA SHREE

Thus, as a moral principle, non-violence has no universal application and, as a spiritual principle, in the sense of absolute refusal to use physical force under all circumstances, it has no validity. A day will come when strife and fight will cease to be instruments of Nature—and it is the bounden duty of all right-thinking and right-acting persons to work towards that

end—but let us not forget in the meantime that evil cannot perish unless those who thrive on evil also perish.

We do not mean that the Gītā is a gospel of war and violence. What we want to emphasize is that for the Karma-yogī there is no duality; and if necessary, if so willed by God, even in battle-drums he can hear the flute of Kṛṣṇa.

The Editors' Apologia

The readers of the 'Kalyana-Kalpataru' will remember that by the grace of God we were able to present them in the first quarter of the preceding year with a detailed commentary on the first six chapters of Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā or the "Lord's Song" in the form of the last Special Number. According to the plan announced on that occasion the commentary on the next six chapters, viz., Chapters VII to XII, ought to have been published in January last and presented to the readers in the form of a Special Number for the current year. But protracted illness and other reasons entirely beyond our control prevented us from executing our plan in time; nay, things came to such a pass that the publication of the journal itself had to be suspended for more than half a year. The "Gita-tattva Number II", which ought to have seen the light of the day towards the end of January last at the latest, is accordingly appearing six months late and we crave the indulgence of our readers for having kept them waiting so long.

Under the existing arrangements the Hindi 'Kalyan' also publishes its annual Special Number in January each year and the synchronous publication of both the annuals presented certain practical difficulties, particularly because the editorial staff of the two periodicals

is almost common. In order to solve this difficulty and with a view to regularizing the publication of the English monthly, which has been long in arrears, it has been thought fit to commence its publication from August instead of from January henceforward. The subscription for the journal will therefore run from August to July as it did from January to December heretofore. We hope the readers will not mind this formal change, which has been necessitated by the peculiar circumstances of the case.

The Gītā has been generally divided into three groups of six chapters each, the first of which is believed to be mainly dealing with Karmayoga, the second with Bhaktiyoga and the third with Jñānayoga. The chapters commented on in this volume thus belong to the second or middle group, which forms the very core of the Gītā. The Lord has laid bare His very heart as it were in these chapters. Although the central teaching of the Gītā is different according to different commentators, and they are all correct according to their own point of view, to an ordinary layman like ourselves devotion or self-surrender to a personal God appears to be the dominant note of the Gītā. According to the Gītā as seen by a layman, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the supreme Reality and devotion or self-surrender to Him is

the crowning endeavour of human life.

India and the Hindus in particular stand in need of the guidance of the Gītā more than ever during this critical period of her history, when she is entering on a new phase of her career. India and the Hindu nation are faced with a situation very similar to the one in which Arjuna found himself placed at the beginning of the Mahābhārata war. Hostile and disruptive forces are threatening their very existence. The sacred body of Mother India has been carved. Although our long cherished dream of a free India stands realized today, we have had to pay a very heavy price for it and our rejoicings over the attainment of freedom are mixed with tears for those who have lost their hearth and home, their life and honour and their near and dear ones in the recent outbursts of vandalism and brute passions in the so-called Pakistan areas. Like Arjuna, the hero of the Mahābhārata, the soul of Hindu India is perplexed today and knows not how to combat the forces of evil that are threatening to engulf us. Our leaders are wavering between action and inaction and advising us to put up with suffering and ignominy at the hands of ruffians. It is at this crucial moment that we should seek the help of the Gītā and try to follow its sublime teachings. The Gītā teaches us that our duty lies in squarely facing the evil and suppressing it rather than in countenancing the same. Like Arjuna we should shake off our paltry faint-heartedness and stand up to resist with

all our might the forces of evil assailing us on all sides, rather than compromise with them. If we listen to the clarion call of the Gītā and follow the lead of the divine Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is ever present with us, we should be able in no time to retrieve our lost honour and successfully overcome the forces of evil.

Before we conclude, it is necessary to add a word about the commentary. The original commentary on the Gītā, written by Syt. Jayadayal Goyandka and forming the basis of the English commentary, has been recently revised by its learned author and the additions and alterations made therein, which are going to be incorporated in the next edition of the "Gita-Tattvanka" of the Hindi 'Kalyan', have been embodied in advance in this volume as well as in "Gita-tattva Number I" published last year. We, however, forgot to mention this fact last year. We hope the readers will kindly forgive this inadvertence on our part.

Lastly we shall be failing in our duty if we omit to express our deep acknowledgement to our friends and colleagues on the editorial staff, who have rendered very useful help to us in revising the press copy and correcting proofs etc. We have no words to express our gratitude to the Almighty Lord but for whose unbounded grace it would have been impossible for us to bring out this small volume. We hope our kind readers will forgive our many shortcomings and continue to extend their goodwill to us. May God shower His blessings on humanity and all other creatures of the world.



OM

Kalyana-Kalpataru

BUSINESS RULES

1. The "Kalyana-Kalpataru" is published every month of the English calendar. Each ordinary number will contain 32 pages of printed matter besides the title sheets and one tri-coloured illustration. Every August number is a Special Number dealing with some particular theme.

2. Commercial advertisements are not accepted for publication in the Magazine.

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6. The Magazine publishes only articles that are helpful in promoting spiritual welfare. It welcomes contributions on subjects like Bhakti, Jñāna and Vairāgya, or biographies of saints who are no more on earth. Articles containing personal attacks or aspersions are not accepted. The Editors reserve to themselves the right of curtailing or supplementing, where necessary, or of publishing, or withholding publication of, articles. Unpublished articles are not returned unless asked for. The Editors are not responsible for the statements or opinions of the contributors.

The Manager,

Kalyana-Kalpataru,

GORAKHPUR, U. P.
(India)

Glory of the Gita

गीता सुगीता कर्तव्या

किमन्यैः शास्त्रविस्तरेः ।

या स्वयं पद्मनाभस्य

मुख्यवादिनिःसृतः ॥

“The Gītā has issued from the lotus-like lips of Bhagavān Viṣṇu Himself, from whose navel has sprung the lotus of creation. Therefore, the Gītā alone should be carefully studied and celebrated in song; of what avail are the other lengthy scriptures !”

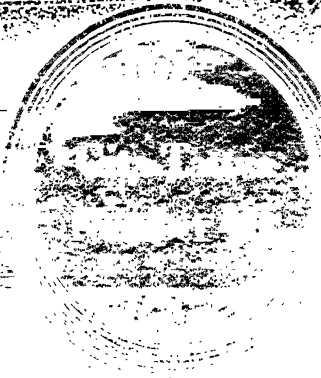


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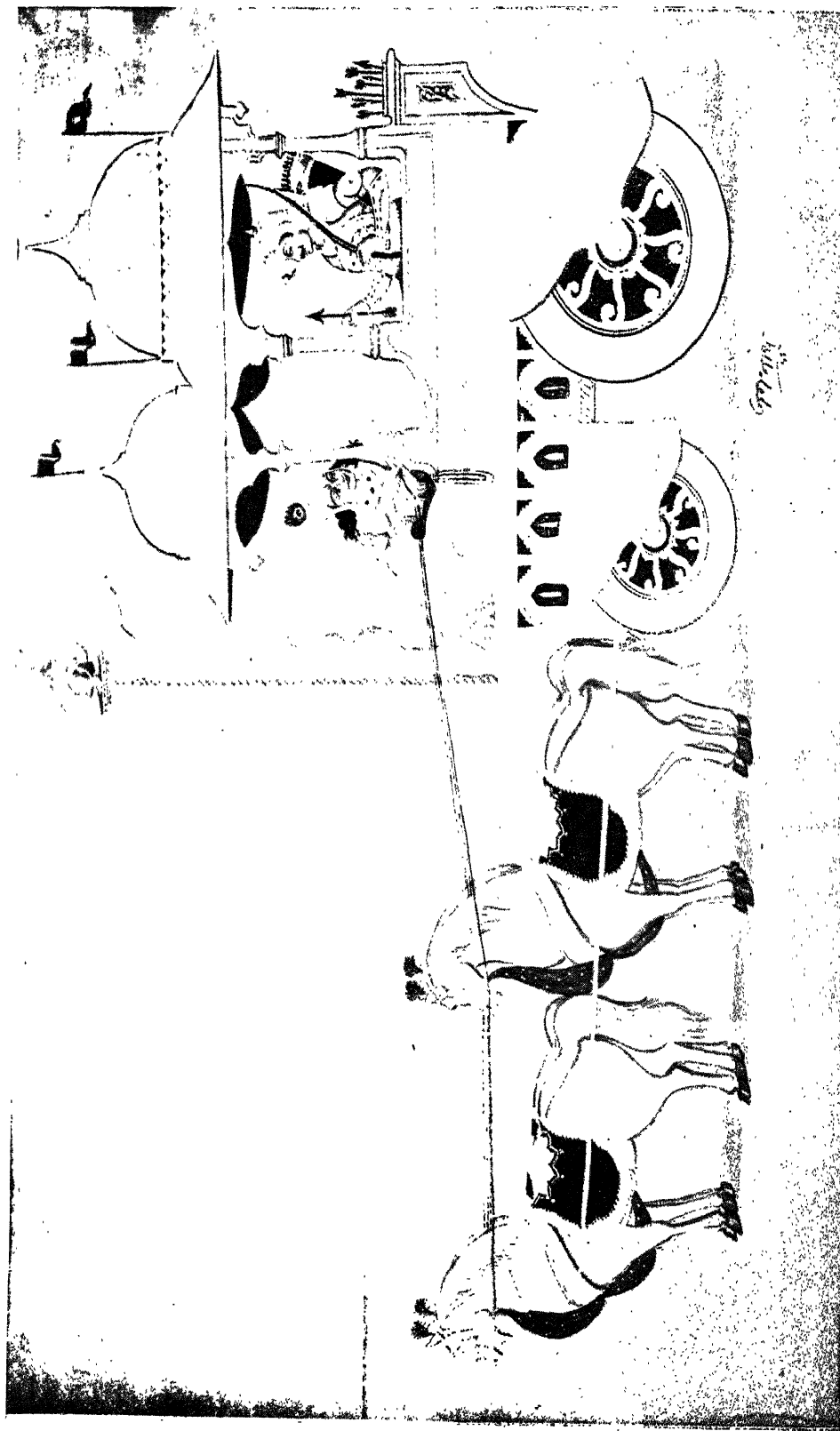
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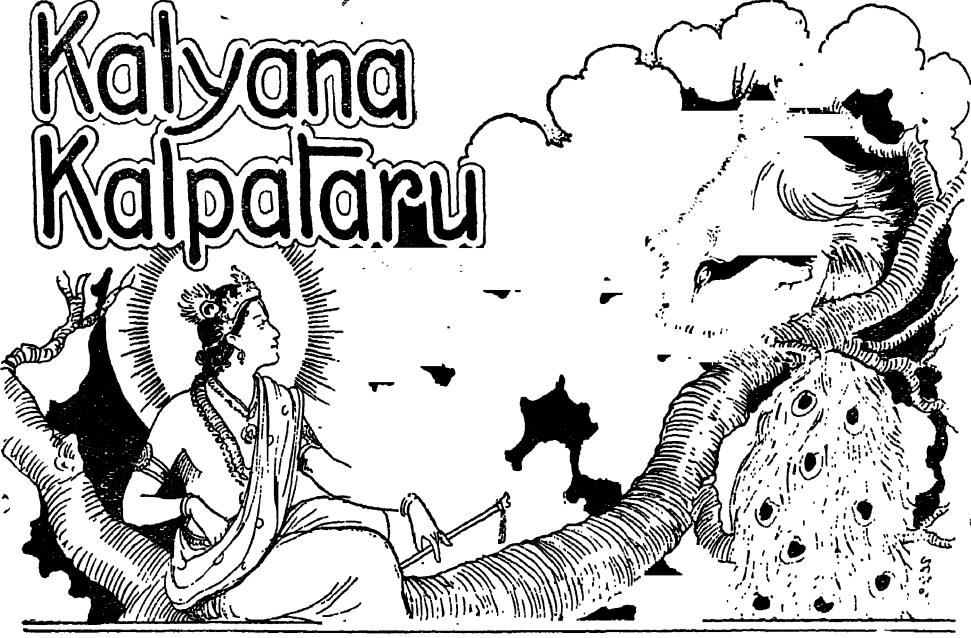
Arjuna's Reawakening



“Kṛpā, by Your Grace my delusion has fled and wisdom has been gained. I stand shorn of all doubts; I will do Your bidding.”
(XVIII. 73)

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

Kalyana Kalpataru



He who seeth Me everywhere, and seeth everything in Me,
Of him will I never lose hold, and he shall never lose hold of Me.

(Bhagavadgītā VI. 30)

Vol. XIV]

August 1948

[No. 1

मेघश्यामोऽवदातस्मितमधुरमुखस्तोत्रवेत्रैकपाणि-

वीभत्सोः सम्मुखेऽजः श्रुतिसुरभिपयोदोहनार्थं प्रवृत्तः ।

लोकानुद्धर्तुकामः श्रुतिविशदयशा भक्तिवश्योऽमलात्मा

स्वामी सर्वस्य कृष्णो वसतु मम मतौ ब्रह्मविद्याश्रितोऽसौ ॥

—Sadānanda

“May Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the unborn, stainless Lord of the universe, the Repository of Brahma-vidyā (Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit), dwell in my mind. He has a swarthy complexion resembling the colour of a cloud. His charming countenance is lit up with a radiant smile. Holding a cane whip in one of His hands, He is engaged in milking the cow of plenty in the form of the Śruti texts before dejected Arjuna in order to redeem the whole world. His glory stands revealed in the Vedas and He is captivated through devotion.”

A General Survey of the Gita

Thou art Mother, Thou art Father,
Thou art Kinsman, Thou art Friend;
Thou art Knowledge, Thou art Wealth,
Thou art my all, O Lord of Lords !

Obeisance to Kṛṣṇa, Guide and
Teacher of the world, son of Vasudeva,
Chastiser of Kaṁsa and Chāṇūra, and
Devaki's supreme delight.

GLORY OF THE GĪTĀ

The Bhagavadgītā contains divine words emanating from the lips of God Himself. Its glory is infinite, unlimited. None can really describe it. Even Śeṣa, the thousand-headed serpent-god, whose back forms the couch of God Viṣṇu, and Śiva and Gaṇeśa, cannot fully depict this glory. How can a puny mortal expect to do it? The Epics and Purāṇas etc. have sung the glory of the Gītā at many places; but if all those words of praise are brought together, even then it cannot be declared that the praise of the Gītā has been exhausted. The fact is that a full description of the glory of the Gītā is never possible. For how can a thing which can be fully described remain unlimited? It at once becomes finite and limited.

As a scripture, the Gītā embodies the supreme spiritual mystery and secret. It contains the essence of all the four Vedas. Its style is so simple and elegant that after a little study man can easily follow the structure of its words; but the thought behind those words is so deep and abstruse that even a lifelong, constant study does not show one the end of it. Every day the book exhibits a new facet of thought,

hence the Gītā remains eternally new. And deep reflection with reverence and faith will make it directly appear impregnated with deep meaning at every step. The virtues, glory, essential character, truth, mystery and worship of God as well as the topics of Action and Knowledge have been discussed in the Gītā in such a way that its parallel can hardly be found in any other book. As a scripture, the Gītā is so incomparable that there is no word in it which is free from some instructive thought. There is not a single word in the Gītā, which may be described as flattering. Whatever statements have been made in it are true to the very letter. Smelling overpraise in the words of God, the very embodiment of Truth, is to show disrespect to the divine words.

The Gītā is an epitome of all the scriptures. The essence of all the scriptures is to be found in it. And it would be no exaggeration, indeed, if it is called the very store-house of all scriptural knowledge. For a mastery of the Gītā may lead one automatically to a comprehension of the truths contained in the other scriptures, and no separate study is required to obtain this knowledge.

The *Mahābhārata* also says: 'सर्वशास्त्रमयी गीता'—"The Gītā comprises all the scriptures." (*Bhīṣma*. 44. 4). But this statement too is inadequate. For all the scriptures have originated from the Vedas, the Vedas were revealed through Brahmā's mouths, and Brahmā himself took his descent from the Lord's navel. In this way, a great distance separates the scriptures from the Lord.

But the Gītā has emanated directly from the lips of the Lord; hence there will be no exaggeration if it is declared as superior to all the scriptures. The divine sage Vedavyāsa himself says:—

गीता सुगीता कर्तव्या किमन्यैः शास्त्रसंग्रहैः ।

या स्वयं पद्मनाभस्य मुखपद्माद्भिनिःसृता ॥

(*Mahābhārata, Bhīṣma-parva, 43. 1.*)

“The Gītā alone should be sung, heard, recited, studied, taught, pondered and assimilated properly and well. What is the use of collecting other scriptures? For the Gītā has emerged directly from the lotus-like lips of God Viṣṇu Himself.”

Through the word ‘Padmanābha’ in the above verse, the author of the *Mahābhārata* has brought out the very idea expressed by us. That is to say, the Gītā has emanated from the lips of the same Lord from whose navel Brahmā took His birth; and the Vedas, which are the source of all the scriptures, were revealed through the mouths of Brahmā.

The Gītā is superior even to the Gangā. In the scriptures, liberation has been declared to be the reward of a bath in the Gangā. But he who bathes in the Gangā though he can obtain liberation himself, does not acquire the power of liberating others. He, however, who takes a dive into the Gītā not only gets liberated himself, but also gains the power of liberating others. The Gangā has sprung from the feet of the Lord, whereas the Gītā has emanated directly from the divine lips. Again, while the Gangā liberates him alone who goes to it and takes a plunge in its waters, the Gītā finds its way to every home, and shows the way to liberation to every individual. These are the reasons

why the Gītā is declared as superior to the Gangā.

The Gītā is superior even to the Gāyatrī. Through the practice of Japa of the Gāyatrī man attains liberation, no doubt. But he who practises Japa of the Gāyatrī secures liberation only for himself; whereas the student of the Gītā liberates not only himself but others as well. When the Dispenser of Liberation, God Himself, becomes his own, Mukti becomes a trifling affair to him. It takes up its abode in the dust of his feet. He makes a gift of Mukti to anyone and everyone who asks for it.

If we declare the Gītā as greater even than God, there will be no exaggeration. The Lord Himself says:—

गीताश्रयेऽहं तिष्ठामि गीता मे चोत्तमं गृहम् ।

गीताज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य त्रीलोकान् पालयाम्यहम् ॥

(*Varāha-purāṇa*)

“I take My stand on the Gītā, the Gītā is My supreme abode. I maintain the three worlds on the strength of the wisdom contained in the Gītā.”

Apart from this, in the Gītā itself the Lord openly declares that he who follows His instructions in the shape of the Gītā will undoubtedly attain liberation. Not only this, He further says that even he who studies this scripture will have worshipped Him through wisdom-sacrifice. When such is the value of a mere study of the Gītā, what shall we say of the man who has moulded his life according to its teachings, initiates God’s devotees into its secrets and disseminates and propagates its teachings among them. Referring to such a man, the Lord says that he is very dear to Him. It will be no exaggeration

to say that he is dearer to God than His very life. The Lord subordinates Himself to the will of such devotees. Even in the case of noble souls, it is found that those who follow their teachings become dearer to them than their own life. The Gītā constitutes the Lord's principal mystic teaching. What wonder, then, that the follower of these teachings should be dearer to Him than even His life?

The Gītā is the very life-breath, the heart, and the verbal image of the Lord. He who has his heart, speech, body and all his senses and their functions imbued with the Gītā is the very embodiment of the Gītā. His very sight, touch, speech and thought lend supreme sanctity to others, to say nothing of those who follow his precept and example? Really speaking, no sacrifice, charity, austerity, pilgrimage, religious vow, self-restraint and fasting etc. stand comparison with the Gītā.

The Gītā contains words directly emanating from the lips of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Its compiler is Maharṣi Vyāsa. The Lord uttered parts of His discourse in verse, which the compiler Vyāsa recorded exactly as they emanated from His lips. The part of it uttered in prose was versified by the compiler; and the words of Arjuna, Sañjaya and Dhṛtarāṣṭra were similarly versified by him in his own words, and dividing the book of seven hundred verses into eighteen chapters, he made it an organic part of the *Mahābhārata*. This is how the book has come down to us.

PURPORT OF THE GĪTĀ

The Gītā is an unfathomable ocean of wisdom. In fact, an infinite store of knowledge lies imbedded in it. The greatest of savants, who have established their reputation by vanquishing their rivals in polemics, and sages engaged in the investigation of truth, find their words incapable of explaining its secrets. For its full meaning is known to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone. The next place may be

assigned to its compiler, Vyāsa, and its direct recipient, Arjuna. The attempt, therefore, on the part of a man like me to fathom the depth of meaning and glory of such a book, full of deep esoteric import, is like the attempt of an ordinary bird winging to measure the extent of the boundless heavens.

The Gītā is a bottomless sea containing endless strata of meaning. Just as a diver diving deep into the sea lays his hands on precious gems, even so, diving deeper and deeper into the secrets of the Gītā, the seeker goes on discovering ever new piles of extraordinary gems of ideas. But the king of birds, Garuḍa, as well as the tiny mosquito both take their flight in the air, each according to his or its capacity. In the same way each and every student of the Gītā makes something out of it according to his or her comprehension.

Therefore, careful enquiry on the subject reveals that the primary aim of the Gītā is to lead the Jiva, merged in the ocean of worldly existence due to ignorance coming down from eternity, to the realization of God; and with this object in view the Gītā prescribes means by adopting which man can realize God even while scrupulously performing his worldly duties. This wonderful art of applying the spiritual truths in practical life has been revealed in the Gītā, which prescribes two paths for God-Realization to suit the nature and qualification of the practisant. These two paths are—(1) the Path of Knowledge or Sāṅkhya-yoga, and (2) the Path of Yoga or Karmayoga (III. 3).

Here it may be pointed out that almost all the scriptures have mentioned three principal ways to God-Realization—(1) Action, (2) Worship and (3) Knowledge. How does the Gītā, then, speak of only two Paths? Does it not recognize the cult of Devotion? Many students of the Gītā, however, understand its teachings as laying

particular emphasis on Devotion, and the Lord too has brought out the special glory of Devotion in clearest terms here and there (VI. 47), and declared His realization as easy of attainment through Devotion (VIII. 14). Our reply to this question is that the cult of 'Upāsana' or Worship dealt with in the scriptures along with those of Action and Knowledge is covered by the two Paths mentioned above. When a man worships God recognizing Him as one with him, such worship falls under Sāṅkhyaniṣṭhā or the Path of Knowledge; and when it is carried on in terms of diversity, it is comprised in Yoganiṣṭhā or the Path of Action. This constitutes the main difference between Sāṅkhyaniṣṭhā and Yoganiṣṭhā. Similarly, verse 24 of Chapter XIII speaks of God-Realization through the practice of meditation alone; but there too it should be understood that meditation which is practised in terms of identity with God falls under Sāṅkhyaniṣṭhā, while that which is practised in terms of diversity is comprised in Yoganiṣṭhā. The popular belief that Devotion is a principal means to God-Realization according to the Gītā is also correct. Devotion has been accorded a very high place in the Gītā, and definite instructions have been given to Arjuna at several places to cultivate Devotion (IX. 34; XII. 8; XVIII. 57, 65, 66). Nevertheless, the Gītā upholds only two Paths. According to it, Devotion forms part of the discipline of Yoga. And, inasmuch as Devotion involves activity, the above view upheld by the Gītā cannot be pronounced to be altogether opposed to reason. The question how Devotion goes with the discipline of Yoga will be examined later in the course of this discussion.

Besides, the various senses in which the two words 'Jñāna' and 'Karma' have been used in the Gītā also carry special significance. In the Gītā 'Karma' and Karma-

yoga, and so 'Jñāna' and Jñānayoga too are not identical. According to the Gītā, action prescribed by the scriptures can be performed from the points of view of both the Path of Knowledge and the Path of Yoga. Even the Path of Knowledge is not opposed to action as such; while in the Path of Yoga, performance of action alone has been recognized to be the Sādhana or practice (VI. 3), whereas actual renunciation of action is deemed to be a hindrance (III. 4). In verses 47 to 51 of Chapter II, verse 19 of Chapter III and verse 42 of Chapter IV, Arjuna has been commanded to perform action following the Path of Yoga; while in III. 28 and V. 8, 9 and 19 the Lord tells us how to perform action from the point of view of the Path of Knowledge. There is no place for action with an interested motive in either of the two Paths; on the other hand, the Lord declares men working with an interested motive as of meagre intelligence (II. 42-44 and 49; VII. 20-23; IX. 20-21, 23-24).

The word 'Jñāna' too has not been used in the Gītā in the sense of Jñānayoga (the Path of Knowledge) alone; it also signifies Self-Realization, which is the culmination of all spiritual practices—of the path of Knowledge as well as of the Path of Yoga,—and which is also called real Knowledge, or the Realization of Truth. Verses 24 and 25 of Chapter IV in their latter halves speak of Jñānayoga or the Yoga of Knowledge, while verses 36 to 39 of the same chapter refer to 'Jñāna' or Self-Realization, which is the culmination of all spiritual practices. In this way, at other places too the word should be interpreted according to the context in which it has been used.

An attempt will now be made briefly to discuss such topics as the essential character of the Path of Knowledge and

the Path of Yoga, the main points of difference between them, their ramifications and the persons qualified to follow these paths, and also whether the two paths are independent of each other or interdependent, and so on.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTER OF THE TWO PATHS

(1) All objects are illusory or unreal like water seen in a mirage or like the world of dream, so that all actions proceeding from the mind, senses and the body are nothing but the moving of Guṇas, born of Māyā (illusion), in the shape of the senses etc. among Guṇas in the shape of the various sense-objects. Realizing thus a follower of the Path of Knowledge no longer claims the doership of those actions (V. 8-9). And remaining constantly established in identity with the all-pervading Supreme Spirit or God, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, he ceases to recognize the existence of anything else than God (XIII. 30). Such is the Path of Knowledge or 'Sāṅkhya-niṣṭhā' as it is called. It is also termed as 'Jñānayoga' or 'Karmasannyāsa'.

(2) A follower of the Path of Yoga, on the other hand, regards everything as belonging to God. He remains equipoised in success and failure and, renouncing attachment and the desire for fruit, performs all actions according to the behests of God (II. 47-51). Or, resigning himself to God in thought, word and deed he practises, with faith and reverence, constant meditation on His divine form, along with His name, virtues and glory (VI. 47). This constitutes the Path of Yoga. It is this path which has been designated by various other names—e. g., Samatvayoga or

Buddhiyoga, *i. e.*, the Yoga of equanimity, 'Tadartha Karma' or 'Madartha Karma', *i. e.*, working for the sake of God, and Sattvic Tyāga or Renunciation of the Sattvic type.

In the path of Yoga, Bhakti or Devotion does play a part, either in a general way, or as the ruling principle. The path of Yoga as enunciated in the Gītā is not divorced from Devotion. Even those verses which do not explicitly mention Devotion or God (II. 47-51) do involve obedience to the commandments of the Lord in any case; and that too is conducive to God-Realization. In this sense Bhakti indirectly figures there too.

For actually treading the Path of Knowledge the Lord has suggested several processes, the fruit of all of which is the same, *viz.*, realization of God, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. Although having many subordinate types, the Yoga of Knowledge may be divided into four main types. They may be represented by the following guiding principles:—

(1) All that exists is Brahma and Brahma alone.

(2) All phenomenal existence is illusory; in fact, nothing exists but Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified.

(3) All that appears is my own self,—it is I.

(4) Whatever appears is illusory and transient, and has no real existence; I, the one eternal conscious Self, exist.

Among these, the practices based on the first two maxims have reference to the word 'Tat' in the Vedic formula 'Tattwamasi' (Thou art That), while the last two have reference to the word 'Twam'

(Thou). The principles given above may be elaborated as follows:—

(1) Whatever appears in this world of animate and inanimate beings is Brahma; nothing is different from God, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. Whatever action we perform, the means and materials of that action, and the doer himself—all that is Brahma (IV. 24). Just as blocks of ice floating in an ocean are pervaded, both inside and outside, by water and water alone, and the blocks themselves are nothing but water, even so all animate and inanimate beings are pervaded, both inside and outside, by God and God alone, and it is He who exists in the form of all those beings (XIII. 15).

(2) Negating all phenomenal existence as illusory, momentary and perishable, and realizing that the substratum of them all, viz., God alone, exists, and nothing besides God, even the mind and intellect should be merged into Brahma; and thus establishing himself in identity with God, the practicant should become one with Him through direct realization (V. 17).

(3) The whole animate and inanimate creation is Brahma, and that Brahma is my own self; hence all this is my own self. Following this line of thought, the practicant should look upon all animate and inanimate beings as his own self.

In the eyes of the practicant who carries on the above practice nothing remains but Brahma; it is in that being of his, which is the same as Knowledge and Bliss solidified, that he now delights (V. 24; VI. 27; XVIII. 54).

(4) Regarding all this phenomenal existence, which is illusory and a product

of the three Guṇas, and all activities proceeding from it, as apart from one's self, perishable and transient, and totally negating them all, the Self alone should be realized as the only Existence (XIII. 27, 34).

In order to enable the practicant to attain the above state of mind, the Lord has inculcated on the mind of the practicant, through various devices and at more than one place, the truth that the Self is the seer, witness, conscious and eternal, and that all material, objective existence such as the body etc.—all that appears—is transient, and therefore unreal; the Self alone is real. In order to support this very view, the Lord devotes verses 11 to 30 of Chapter II to a discussion of the eternal, pure, awakened, formless, changeless, actionless and transcendent Self. Practicants who look upon God as their own self attain Self-Realization only when they proceed with their Sādhana regarding the soul as possessed of these characteristics. Whatever action is taking place is nothing but the play of the Guṇas among themselves; the Self has nothing to do with them (V. 8, 9; XIV. 19)—it neither does anything itself nor causes anything to be done. Realizing this they constantly and eternally feel supreme joy within their own self (V. 13).

Of the four practices of Jñānayoga mentioned above, the first two are associated with the worship of Brahma, while the third and the fourth are conjoined with the form of worship in which the worshipper regards the deity as his own self.

Here the question arises: Are the above four practices to be carried on at the end of abstract meditation, or during the meditation itself? Or, can they be followed in both the states? Our reply to this question is that only the process

delineated at the end of section (4) above, which proceeds on the lines indicated in V. 9, is to be practised while dealing with the world; whereas that given at the beginning of section (2) and which has to be practised according to verse 17 of Chapter V, is to be carried on only during meditation. The rest can ordinarily be practised in both the states.

In this connection the following extracts from the Gita attract our special notice:—

(1) वासुदेवः सर्वमिति — 'Whatever appears is the same as God' (VII. 19); and

(2) सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः— 'He who, established in unity, worships Me as residing in all beings as their self' (VI. 31). One may ask here: Why have these not been mentioned in connection with the processes delineated in section (1) above? Our reply to this question is that both these verses occur in the context of Bhakti and both relate to a God-realized soul; hence they have not been mentioned in connection with the first practice. Should, however, anyone treat these verses as bearing on the path of Knowledge and desire to carry on practice in accordance with the same, there can be no objection to it.

Just as the discipline of Knowledge has been divided into four types as above; even so the discipline of Yoga may be classified under three main heads:—

(1) Karmayoga with special emphasis on Action.

(2) Karmayoga blended with Devotion.

(3) Karmayoga dominated by Devotion.

(1) Karmayoga with special emphasis

on Action consists in performing duties enjoined by the scriptures with due regard to one's grade in society and stage in life, completely renouncing the desire for fruit and attachment in respect of all actions and worldly objects. In His teachings on this type of Karmayoga, the Lord has at some places insisted on the renunciation of the fruit alone (V. 12; VI. 1; XII. 11; XVIII. 11); at other places He has laid stress on the renunciation of attachment alone (III. 19; VI. 4); while at still other places He has demanded the renunciation of the fruit as well as of attachment (II. 47, 48; XVIII. 6, 9). Where stress has been laid on the renunciation of the fruit alone, renunciation of attachment too should be taken as covered by the same; while in the context where renunciation of attachment alone has been insisted upon, renunciation of the fruit as well should be taken as implied therein. The discipline of Action is really consummated only when both the fruit and attachment are renounced.

(2) Karmayoga blended with Devotion: In this discipline the practicant has been asked to worship God through the performance of duties appropriate to his Varṇa or grade in society, regarding Him as present in the whole universe (XVIII. 46).

(3) Karmayoga dominated by Devotion: It is further divided into:—

(a) Offering of actions to God, and

(b) Action for the sake of God.

Offering of actions to God is also practised in two ways. In that which is known as the 'complete surrender' the practicant renounces the feeling of mineness,

attachment and the desire for fruit in respect of all actions; he believes that everything belongs to God, that he too is God's, and whatever acts are performed by him are also His, and that it is God who is getting everything done by him as the showman gets things done by his puppet. And with this belief he performs duties prescribed in the Śāstras according to His behests and for His pleasure alone (III. 30; XII. 6; XVIII. 57, 66).

Besides this, an act done with some other motive in the first instance may at a later stage be offered to God; it may be offered in the middle even during the process of its performance; it may be offered as soon as it is completed; or its fruit alone may be offered. All these are so many forms of offering one's actions to God, even though they represent only its initial stage. It is through the continued practice of these preliminary stages that the stage of 'complete surrender' as referred to above is ultimately reached.

'Action for the sake of God' is also of two kinds:—

Duties enjoined by the scriptures, which are performed according to the behests of God, with the object of God-Realization or attainment of divine love, or for the sake of God's pleasure, and even so offering worship to the Lord's images etc. and other acts of worship such as the practice of adoration and meditation etc.,—which are performed for the sake of God alone and which are even externally connected with God,—both these are included in 'actions for the sake of God'. Both these types of action have been referred to in the Gītā by the terms 'Matkarma' and 'Madārtha-Karma' (XI. 55; XII. 10).

That which has been spoken of as exclusive devotion or the Yoga of Devotion (VIII. 14, 22; IX. 13, 14, 22, 30, 34; X. 9; XIII. 10; XIV. 26) is also included in the two types of action represented by the words, 'Bhagavadarpaṇa' (action offered to God) and 'Bhagavadārtha' (action for the sake of God). The fruit of all these is the same,—viz., God-Realization.

The next question is, "Is the Path of Yoga an independent means to God-Realization, or does it contribute to God-Realization as an auxiliary to the Path of Knowledge?" Our reply to this question is that the Gītā subscribes to both these views. In other words, the Gītā holds the Path of Yoga to be both an independent means to God-Realization or liberation, and as subsidiary to the Path of Knowledge. If the practisant so desires, he can, without the help of the discipline of Knowledge, attain the highest perfection directly through the practice of Karmayoga; or, obtaining access to the Path of Knowledge through Karmayoga, he can realize God by treading the Path of Knowledge. Which of the two courses he should adopt, depends on his predilection or predisposition. That the Path of Yoga is an independent means has been clearly affirmed by the Lord in V. 4 and 5, as well as in XIII. 24. That he who works for God alone, fixing his mind on Him, realizes Him through His grace, has also been declared by the Lord at several places (VIII. 7; XI. 54, 55; XII. 6-8).

Even so disinterested action and worship both can also play their part as subsidiary to the Path of Knowledge. (V. 6; XIV. 26). But, as Jñānayoga is characterized by a form of worship in which the worshipper looks on God as his own self, the Path

of Knowledge cannot be auxiliary to Bhaktiyoga, or the path of Yoga, in which the worshipper views God as distinct from him. It is quite another thing if a follower of the path of Knowledge later on finds his inclination or opinion changed, and giving up this path takes to the path of Yoga, and then realizes God through the latter path.

Here it may be asked: What is the process followed by those who, having taken to Karmayoga or the Path of Yoga in the beginning, realize God later on through the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga or the Yoga of Knowledge? The process followed by such practicers may be referred to by the term 'Tyāga' or renunciation and divided into the following seven stages:—

(1) TOTAL RENUNCIATION OF PROHIBITED ACTS

This consists in wholly abstaining, in thought, word and deed, from vile deeds prohibited by the scriptures, such as thieving, adultery, lying, duplicity, chicanery, coercion, violence, taking forbidden food, indulgence in frivolities, etc. This is the first stage of Renunciation.

(2) RENUNCIATION OF ACTIONS MOTIVATED BY DESIRE

This means ceasing to perform, with a selfish motive, sacrifices, charity, penance, worship and other actions motivated by desire, which are generally performed with a view to obtaining agreeable objects, such as wife, progeny and wealth etc., or with the object of securing freedom from some ailment or ridding oneself of other calamities. This is the second stage of Renunciation.

If by chance one is confronted with a duty, secular or sacred, which is outwardly motivated by desire, but the omission of which is calculated to cause pain to anyone or interferes with the time-honoured institutions of Action and Worship, there is no objection to one's performing it disinterestedly, and only for the good of the world. Thereby he will not be deemed to have performed an act motivated by desire.

(3) COMPLETE RENUNCIATION OF THIRST FOR WORLDLY OBJECTS

This consists in giving up the thirst for enhancing one's honour, fame, social prestige, and the number of one's wives, progeny and whatever other objects of a transient nature have fallen to one's lot, regarding them as an obstacle to God-Realization. This is the third stage of Renunciation.

(4) RENUNCIATION OF THE PRACTICE OF TAKING SERVICE FROM OTHERS WITH A SELFISH MOTIVE

Asking for money or bodily service from another for one's own gratification, and accepting articles or bodily service offered without one's asking for the same, and seeking to attain one's selfish end through anyone by any means whatsoever—all this is included in taking service from another with a selfish motive. Renunciation of all these is the fourth stage of Renunciation.

If non-acceptance of physical service from another, or of refreshments etc. offered by another, where one is entitled to receive such service or offer, causes any pain to anyone, or in any way hinders the education of the people, accepting service

on such an occasion in an unselfish spirit, and only for the pleasure of those offering it, would not be blameworthy. For non-acceptance of service offered by one's own wife, son or servant, or of refreshments etc. offered by friends and relatives etc. is likely to cause them pain and may prove harmful, so far as propriety of social conduct is concerned.

(5) ABSOLUTE RENUNCIATION OF SLOTH AND THE DESIRE FOR FRUIT IN RESPECT OF ALL ONE'S DUTIES

Devotion to God, worship of gods, service of one's parents and other elders, performance of sacrifices, charity and penance, earning one's livelihood appropriate to one's grade in society and stage in life and bodily functions such as taking of food and drink and so on—all these constitute one's duty; and giving up sloth and every form of desire in respect of these is the fifth stage of Renunciation.

(6) TOTAL RENUNCIATION OF THE SENSE OF MEUM AND ATTACHMENT WITH REGARD TO ALL WORLDLY OBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

All worldly objects like wealth, house, clothes etc., all near and dear ones like wife, children, friends etc., and all forms of enjoyment of this world and the next like honour, fame, prestige etc. are momentary and perishable, and should be regarded as impermanent; and there should be no sense of meum and attachment with regard to them. Similarly, having developed exclusive and unadulterated love for God alone, one should cease to entertain all sense of meum and attachment with regard to actions performed through the mind,

speech and body, and even with respect to the body itself. This is the sixth type of Renunciation.

Men who have reached this sixth stage of Renunciation develop aversion for all objects of the world; and God, who is the supreme embodiment of Love, becomes the only object of their attachment. Therefore, hearing and telling and mentally dwelling on the stories of spotless divine Love, which reveal His virtues, glory and mystery, and practising constant adoration and meditation, and pondering the hidden meaning of the scriptures while living in a secluded place are their only favourite pursuits. They do not like to live in the midst of sensual men or to waste even a moment of their valuable time in mirth, luxury, carelessness, vilification of others, sensuous enjoyments and idle talk etc. And they perform all their duties in a disinterested way only for God's sake, dwelling all the time on His Name and Form.

The above six stages of Renunciation constitute the practice of Karmayoga. Through the continued practice of this discipline the practisant realizes the truth about God by His grace, and thereby attains the imperishable supreme state (XVIII. 56).

Should, however, anyone seek to realize God through Sāṅkhyayoga or the Path of Knowledge, he should, after practising the above six forms of Renunciation, tread the Path of Knowledge on the lines of the following seventh stage:—

(7) COMPLETE RENUNCIATION OF LATENT DESIRES AND SELF-IDENTIFICATION WITH REGARD TO THE WORLD, ONE'S OWN BODY AND ALL ACTIONS

All objects of the world, being products of Māyā, are wholly transient, and

God alone, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, is equally present everywhere: with this conviction one should erase from one's mind all thoughts of worldly objects, including the body, and every form of activity even in the form of impressions. And completely renouncing self-identification with the body, one should totally disclaim doership with regard to all actions performed by the mind, speech and body, and get firmly and constantly established in identity with God. This is the seventh stage of Renunciation.

Through such practice the practicant easily and immediately succeeds in realizing God (VI. 28). But the practicant who adopts the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga from the very beginning, without going through the discipline of Karmayoga as outlined in the foregoing paragraphs, attains God with difficulty.

संन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्नुययोगतः । (V. 6)

Here the question arises: Is it possible for a practicant to practise both the disciplines simultaneously? If not, why not? Our reply to this question is that the two disciplines of Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga cannot be followed by the same practicant at one and the same time. For, during the process of his Sādhana, the Karmayogī recognizes action, the fruit of action, God and his own self as distinct entities and, renouncing the fruit of action and attachment, performs all his duties for the sake of God, or as an offering to God (III. 30; V. 10; XI. 55; XII. 10; XVIII. 56-57). The Sāṅkhyayogī, on the other hand, disclaims the doership with regard to all actions performed by his mind, senses and body, regarding them as nothing but the moving of the Guṇas,—which

are the products of Māyā,—among themselves, or that of the senses among their objects, and remains established in identity with the all-pervading Divinity, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified (III. 28; V. 13; XIII. 29; XIV. 19-20; XVIII. 49-55). The Karmayogī regards himself as the doer of actions (V. 11); the Sāṅkhyayogī does not (V. 8, 9). The Karmayogī offers his actions to God (IX. 27-28); the Sāṅkhyayogī does not recognize actions, performed by the mind and senses without any sense of doership, as actions at all (XVIII. 17). The Karmayogī views God as apart from him (XII. 10); the Sāṅkhyayogī looks on Him as ever identical with him (XVIII. 20). The Karmayogī recognizes the existence of Prakṛti and all objects evolved from Prakṛti (XVIII. 61); the Sāṅkhyayogī refuses to recognize the existence of anything other than Brahma (XIII. 30). The Karmayogī recognizes the existence of Karma and its fruit; the Sāṅkhyayogī, on the other hand, neither recognizes the existence of any action or its fruit as apart from Brahma, nor claims to have any connection with such action. Thus the process of Sādhana as well as the views of the two types of practicants are poles asunder. Under the circumstances, it is not possible for the same individual to follow the two disciplines at one and the same time. Just as a person, intending to travel from India to New York in America, would reach America if he continues to travel along the correct route either purely eastward or purely westward, even so, though the disciplines of Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga proceed on altogether different lines, a practicant who resolutely pursues either will speedily reach the supreme common goal of both, viz., God (V. 4),

ELIGIBILITY FOR THE TWO PATHS

The question now remains: Who are eligible for the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga as taught by the Gītā? Are they open to all irrespective of class, creed or nationality? Or only persons belonging to a particular Varṇa or grade in society, a particular Āśrama or stage in life and a particular community are eligible for their practice? Our reply to this question is that, although the method of spiritual discipline as enunciated by the Gītā is wholly Indian in character, and has been followed by the Ṛṣis or ancient seers of India, nevertheless on a careful reflection on the teachings of the Gītā it can be safely asserted that the spiritual disciplines taught in the Gītā can be practised by all human beings. This gospel of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Teacher of the whole world that He is, is intended for all mankind—and not for any particular class or order. This constitutes a distinctive feature of the Gītā. The Lord has made this point abundantly clear in the course of His teachings by using words like 'Mānavah' (a human being), 'Narah' (man), 'Dehabhṛt' (an embodied soul), 'Dehī' (one possessed of a body) etc. at several places. While enunciating the fundamental practice of Sāṅkhyayoga, the Lord throws it open to all humanity by using the word 'Dehī' in that context (V. 13). Similarly, the Lord declares in unequivocal terms that any human being can attain perfection by worshipping the all-pervading Divinity through the performance of duties allotted to him by the scriptures XVIII. 46. Even so with regard to Devotion, the Lord declares women, the Śūdras, (members of the labouring class) and even those of

vile birth as qualified to practise it (IX. 32). And wherever else the Lord teaches any particular discipline, He never restricts its practice to men belonging to a particular Varṇa, Āśrama or community alone.

Nevertheless, it should be remembered that all actions are not suited to all individuals. That is why the Lord lays great emphasis on Varṇa-Dharma or the division of duties according to different Varṇas or castes. Only those actions that have been prescribed for a particular Varṇa or grade in society constitute the duty of that Varṇa, and not those prescribed for any other Varṇa. It is by this principle that one's action should be governed. Every human being can perform duties allotted to him by such Varṇadharmā (or the code of conduct prescribed for the different Varṇas or castes) according to his qualifications and taste. Apart from the duties prescribed for one's Varṇa or grade in society, duties prescribed for the whole of humanity, such as right conduct and devotion etc., can be practised by all.

Some people hold the view that only those belonging to the order of Sannyāsa, and members of no other Āśrama or order are eligible for the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga. This too does not appear to be supported by reason. In verse 18 of Chapter II, the Lord commands Arjuna to fight even from the point of view of Sankhya. If He recognized Sannyāsis alone as eligible for the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga, He could never have commanded Arjuna to fight from the said point of view. For the order of Sannyāsa shuts out all action, much more terrible deeds like fighting. Moreover, Arjuna was no Sannyāsi or recluse either. And the Lord has even advised him to approach men of spiritual

insight, and seek enlightenment from them (IV. 34).

Apart from this, in verse 4 of Chapter III, the Lord declares that perfection in Sāṅkhyayoga cannot be attained merely by refraining from action. If the Lord regarded Sannyāsis alone as qualified for the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga, He would have declared renunciation of actions as indispensable for the same, rather than make the above statement. Not only this, in verses 7-11 of Chapter XIII, where He has enumerated various means of attaining wisdom, renunciation of attachment for and identification with son, wife, home etc. has also been mentioned as one such means—‘असक्तिरनभिःपुत्रदारगृहादिषु’.

The question of giving up attachment for and identification with one's wife, children, wealth, home etc. arises only where there is connection with them. In the order of Sannyāsa, there is no connection with wife, children and so on; under the circumstance, if Sannyāsis alone were qualified to practise Jñānayoga, it was needless to mention renunciation of attachment for and identification with them as a means of attaining wisdom; for the question of renouncing them does not arise in the case of a Sannyāsi.

Again, in Chapter XVIII, where Arjuna makes a direct enquiry about the nature of Sannyāsa and Tyāga, the Lord discusses, in verses 13 to 40, the subject of Sāṅkhyayoga or the Path of Knowledge in place of Sannyāsa, and nowhere mentions the order of Sannyāsa. If the Lord implied the order of Sannyāsa by the word ‘Sannyāsa’, or if He regarded Sannyāsis alone as qualified to practise Sāṅkhyayoga, He would have certainly mentioned this in clear terms on that

occasion. All this definitely proves that the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga is equally open to the Sannyāsi as well as to the householder. Of course, it is true that for the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga the order of Sannyāsa affords greater facilities; and in this sense the mode of life of a recluse may certainly be declared as better suited for the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga than that of a householder.

In the practice of Karmayoga action is predominant and one is specially enjoined to perform the duty prescribed for one's grade in society (III. 8; XVIII. 45-46); on the other hand, renunciation of action has been declared as a hindrance in this path (III. 4). Therefore, in the order of Sannyāsa, one cannot practise Karmayoga which lays special emphasis on Action; for in that order there is actual renunciation both of material objects and actions such as sacrifice and charity etc. Practice of devotion to God, however, can be carried on in all Āśramas. Hence the practice of Karmayoga dominated by Devotion is possible in all Āśramas.

There are people who labour under a misconception that the Gītā is useful only for hermits and recluses, and is of no use to householders. That is why people generally keep their boys aloof from the Gītā under the obsession that a study of this book may lead them to renounce their household. But the above facts belie their apprehension. They fail to perceive that it was due to the supremely esoteric teaching of the Gītā that Arjuna,—who had, under a spell of delusion shrunk from his duty as a Kṣatriya and made up his mind to live on alms,—remained a householder all his life and continued to perform his duties. How could the same Gītā produce such a

contrary result in the case of our boys? Not only that; the Deliverer of the Gītā, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, so long as He remained on earth as an Avatāra (a direct manifestation of the Deity), remained constantly engaged in action,—protected the virtuous, redeemed the wicked by putting an end to their earthly existence and established the kingdom of righteousness on earth. He even went the length of saying that if He did not scrupulously engage in action, people would follow His ways and give up their duty; and thus He would be responsible for creating confusion in society (III. 23-24). This does not mean either that the Gītā is not meant for recluses. The Gītā is intended for men belonging to all Varṇas and Āśramas. All can undertake spiritual practice according to the principles of either Sāṅkhya or Yoga, for whichever they may be qualified, performing actions pertaining to their respective Varṇa or Āśrama.

DEVOTION IN THE GĪTĀ

The paths of Devotion, Knowledge and Action—all these have been discussed at length in the Gītā. Practicants following any of these paths can obtain sufficient material for their guidance in the book. Arjuna, however, was a devotee of the Lord; therefore, while throwing light on the various paths, wherever personal instructions are given to Arjuna for his own guidance, the Lord generally exhorts him to follow the Path of Action with special emphasis on Devotion (III. 30; VIII. 7; XII. 8; XVIII. 57, 62, 65, 66). In some places, he has even been urged to action alone (II. 48, 50; III. 8, 9, 19; IV. 42; VI. 46; XI. 33-34); but there too devotion should be inferred as implied, drawing the inference from other places.

In IV. 34 the Lord directs Arjuna to approach the enlightened and seek enlightenment from them, and that too in order to show him the method of attaining Self-Realization and by way of cautioning him. The Lord did not really mean to direct Arjuna to any enlightened soul to seek wisdom, nor did Arjuna actually seek wisdom anywhere according to the process mentioned in that verse. A reference to the beginning and end of the Gītā also leads one to the conclusion that the culmination of the Gītā lies in 'Self-surrender'. True, the teaching of the Gītā actually commences from the verse 'अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वम्' etc.—"You grieve over those who should not be grieved for" (II. 11); but the seed of this teaching is contained in Arjuna's statement in verse II. 7 'कार्पण्यदोषोपहृतस्वभावः' etc., in which the word 'Prapannam' (having taken refuge) reveals his spirit of self-surrender. That is why it is with a call to surrender that the Lord concludes His teaching with the words 'सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य'—'Resigning all duties to Me' etc.

There is not a single chapter in the Gītā, in which there is no reference to Devotion at one place or another. By way of illustration the reader is referred to verse 61 of Chapter II, verse 30 of Chapter III, verse 11 of Chapter IV, verse 29 of Chapter V, verse 47 of Chapter VI, verse 14 of Chapter VII, verse 14 of Chapter VIII, verse 34 of Chapter IX, verse 9 of Chapter X, verse 54 of Chapter XI, verse 2 of Chapter XII, verse 10 of Chapter XIII, verse 26 of Chapter XIV, verse 19 of Chapter XV, verse 1 of Chapter XVI (where the compound word 'Jñānayogavyavasthitiḥ' refers to the practice of meditation on God), verse 27 of

Chapter XVII, and verse 66 of Chapter XVIII. In this way each and every chapter of the Gītā contains a reference to Devotion. Chapters VII to XII, in particular, contain copious references to Bhakti; that is why these six chapters have been recognized as dealing primarily with Bhakti. For the sake of illustration, only one verse from each chapter has been cited above.

Even so references to Knowledge too may be found in several chapters. By way of illustration the reader is invited to verse 29 of Chapter II, verse 28 of Chapter III, verse 24 of Chapter IV, verse 13 of Chapter V, verse 29 of Chapter VI, verse 13 of Chapter VIII, verse 15 of Chapter IX, verse 3 of Chapter XII, verse 34 of Chapter XIII, verse 19 of Chapter XIV and verse 49 of Chapter XVIII. Of all other chapters, Chapters II, V, XIII and XVIII in particular contain numerous verses dealing with the subject of Knowledge.

Even as the Gītā fully reveals the truth about Devotion and Knowledge, so does it unfold the secret of Action as well. Verses 39 to 53 of Chapter II, verses 4 to 35 of Chapter III, verses 13 to 32 of Chapter IV, verses 2 to 7 of Chapter V, and verses 1 to 4 of Chapter VI fully unravel the secret of Action. Of these, again, verse 47 of Chapter II and verses 16 to 18 of Chapter IV throw particular light on the subject of Action. Apart from these the topic of Action has been dealt with in other chapters too.

For dearth of space, more references are not being given here. All this shows that the Gītā does not only confine itself to a discussion of Devotion alone but

throws ample light on all the three subjects of Knowledge, Action and Devotion.

GOD AS QUALIFIED AND ABSOLUTE, AND HIS WORSHIP

It has been stated above that whether we worship God as apart from ourselves, or as our own self, the fruit of both is the same. How is it true? For, to him who worships God as other than himself, the Lord reveals His divine form; and when the worshipper leaves his body, he ascends to the Lord's own supreme Abode. He who worships God as his own self, on the other hand, becomes one with Brahma or the Absolute. There is no change of place for him. Our reply to this question is that what we have stated is true, and the objection raised above is also to the point. How can the two facts be reconciled, is being shown below.

The form of God-Realization varies in every individual case according to the sentiment and faith of the worshipper during the period of his spiritual discipline. Those who worship Him in terms of identity, *i. e.*, as their own self, realize Him in terms of identity; while to those who worship Him in terms of diversity, He reveals Himself as other than the worshipper. God is realized differently by different strivers according to their respective conviction.

Worship in terms of identity and worship in terms of diversity, both these constitute the worship of God; for God is both absolute and qualified, with form and without form, manifest and unmanifest, and what not. To those who regard Him as absolute and formless, He is devoid of attributes and form (XII. 3). To those who look upon Him as qualified and

formless, He is possessed of attributes though devoid of form (VIII. 9). To those who view Him as almighty, all-supporting, all-pervading, all-surpassing, *i. e.*, adorned with all excellent virtues, He is endowed with all noble virtues (XV. 15, 17, 19).* To those who hold Him as embracing everything, He embraces all (VII. 7-12; IX. 16-19). To those who recognize Him as possessed of form and attributes both, He reveals Himself as such (IV. 8; IX. 26).

What has been stated above is, no doubt, true; but this does not solve the basic point raised by the questioner, which stands as it is. The question was just this: When God is realized differently by different individuals, how can the fruit of the various disciplines be called one? Our reply to this question is that the realization of God by the practisant corresponds in the first instance with his own conception about God or with his sentiment in respect of Him. The realization of His true nature, that follows next, is beyond the range of speech; words fail to describe what it is like. The ultimate fruit of all forms of worship is one and the same, no matter whether He is worshipped in terms of identity or in those of diversity. In order to make this very point clear the Lord says that those who worship God in terms of identity realize the Lord Himself (XII. 4; XIV. 19; XVIII. 55), and he who worships Him in terms of diversity becomes one

with Brahma or the Absolute (XIV. 26), secures lasting peace (IX. 31), realizes Brahma (VII. 29), attains the eternal, imperishable Abode (XVIII. 56), and so on and so forth. It is in order to impress upon the mind of Arjuna the identity of fruit of both forms of worship—that carried on in terms of identity and that practised in terms of diversity—that the Lord expresses the same truth in various ways, both directly and indirectly. The goal to be attained, the truth to be realized by both the types of worshippers,—those who worship Him in terms of identity and those who worship Him in terms of diversity,—is one and the same; it has been mentioned in some places as ‘supreme peace’ and the ‘eternal state’ (XVIII. 62), as the Supreme Abode at another (XV. 6), and as ‘Amṛta’ (supreme Bliss) at still another (XIII. 12). Again, it has been referred to at some places as the ‘supreme state’ (VIII. 13), and at still others as ‘highest perfection’ (XVIII. 45). It has been spoken of at one place as ‘the imperishable supreme State’ (XV. 5), as ‘Brahma who is all peace’ at another (V. 24) and as ‘everlasting peace consisting of supreme Bliss’ (VI. 15) at still another. Besides these, many more words have been used in the Gītā to denote that ultimate fruit. But nothing can be said about it beyond the assertion that it is the fruit of all disciplines. It transcends speech. He alone who has attained that object knows it; but he too cannot describe it. He can only hint at it by the use of the above or similar other words, even as we help a friend to pick out the new moon by pointing to a bough which appears to touch it. (This is what is known as the Śākhāchandra-nyāya in Sanskrit.) Hence the only reasonable conclusion is that the

* The verses referred to above mention only the excellent virtues of God. Hence the word ‘Apohana’ in XV. 15 has been interpreted by us, not in the sense of effacement of memory and wisdom, but as that of doubt and misapprehension.

supreme Reality which is the 'fruit' of all spiritual practices is one.

This reality of God is transcendent in character, a supreme mystery, and the secret of all secrets. He alone who has realized it knows it. But even this assertion is made only with the object of pointing to that Reality. Considered logically, however, even this statement is wide of the mark.

EQUANIMITY IN THE GĪTĀ

Equanimity is the dominant note of the Gīta. The test of God-Realization lies in the attainment of equanimity. In all the three paths of Knowledge, Action and Devotion, cultivation of equanimity has been declared as essential even as part of the discipline to be followed; and equanimity has been pointed out as a distinguishing mark of those who have realized God through any of the three paths. Divorced from equanimity, even spiritual practice is deficient, much more Realization. He who lacks equanimity cannot be called a realized soul. The use of the compound word 'Samaduhkhasukham' (balanced in joy and sorrow) in II. 15 denotes that of those who tread the Path of Knowledge only he who is possessed of equanimity is eligible for immortality or liberation. The latter half of II. 48, which declares Yoga to consist in equanimity—'समत्वं योग उच्यते'—enjoins the follower of the Path of Action to maintain his balance of mind while performing his duties. And in verse 20 of Chapter XII, the Lord expects even a practisant treading the Path of Devotion to practise equanimity. Even so equanimity finds a prominent place among the marks of a Guṇātīta or a realized Jñānayogī (XIV. 24-25). Again, a

realized Karmayogī has been declared as equipoised (VI. 7-9) and equanimity has also been included among the marks of a realized devotee (XII. 18-19).

In order to enable Arjuna to grasp the truth of this virtue easily and thoroughly, the Lord explains in the Gīta in different ways the conception of equanimity with reference to all living beings, actions, abstract ideas and objects. For example—

EVEN-MINDEDNESS TOWARDS MEN IN GENERAL

"He who looks upon well-wishers and neutrals as well as mediators, friends and foes, relatives and objects of hatred, the virtuous and the sinful, with the same eye, stands supreme." (VI. 9.)

EVEN-MINDEDNESS TOWARDS MEN AND ANIMALS

"The wise look with the same eye on a Brahman endowed with learning and culture, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a pariah too." (V. 18.)

EVEN-MINDEDNESS TOWARDS ALL BEINGS

"Arjuna, he who looks on all as one, on the analogy of his own self, and looks upon the joy and sorrow of all with a similar eye,—such a Yogī is deemed the highest of all." (VI. 32.)

At some places, the Lord mentions equanimity with reference to men, actions, objects and abstract ideas together. For example—

"He who is alike to friend and foe, as well as to honour and ignominy, who remains balanced in heat and cold, pleasure and pain, and other pairs of opposites, and is free from attachment". (XII. 18.)

In the above passage, 'friend' and 'foe' stand for men; 'honour' and 'ignominy' represent treatment by others, which is an action; 'heat' and 'cold' refer to objects; while 'joy' and 'sorrow' are abstract ideas.

"He who is ever established in the Self takes woe and joy alike, regards a clod of earth, a stone and a piece of gold as equal in value, is possessed of wisdom, receives the pleasant as well as the unpleasant in the same spirit, and views censure and praise alike." (XIV. 24)

In the above passage as well 'sorrow' and 'joy' are abstract ideas; 'clod of earth', 'stone' and 'gold' represent objects; 'censure' and 'praise' typify action by others; while 'pleasant' and 'unpleasant' refer to all the four, viz., beings, ideas, objects and actions.

In this way he who looks on all with the same eye, who, though entertaining the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' only in name in his dealings with the world, is even-minded towards all, who sees unity in the whole world,—such a man is possessed of equanimity and he alone is an advocate of equality in the real sense of the term.

There is a world of difference between the cult of equanimity preached by the Gītā and the doctrine of so-called equality preached by modern socialism. Modern socialism is anti-theistic in its outlook, whereas the cult of equanimity preached by the Gītā sees God everywhere and in everything. One uproots Religion, while the other upholds Religion at every step; one is violent in its conception, while the other establishes the principle of non-violence; one is based on self-interest, while the other has no room for selfishness. One, though

abolishing all distinctions in the matter of interdining and social intercourse etc., maintains disunion in spirit; while the other, though maintaining due discrimination in the matter of interdining and social intercourse according to the bounds prescribed in the Śāstras, does not admit any disparity in spirit and exhorts us to perceive the supreme Spirit as the same in all. The goal of one is mammon-worship, while that of the other is God-Realization. In one there is identification with one's party and disrespect for others; while in the other there is complete absence of pride, and respect for all which comes from a sense of the immanence of God. In one, there is emphasis on external behaviour, while in the other it is the spirit which matters; in one it is material happiness which is of primary importance, while in the other it is spiritual happiness that counts; in one there is want of tolerance for others' wealth and others' views, in the other there is equal respect for all; one is dominated by partiality and prejudice, while the other prescribes conduct which is free from partiality and prejudice.

DESTINY OF JĪVAS AFTER DEATH

The Gītā mentions three grades of destinies, viz., high, middling and low, corresponding to the qualities and actions of the Jīvas. The destiny of those who perform duties and worship prescribed in the Śāstras from the points of view of Karmayoga and Sāṅkhyayoga has been described in verse 24 of Chapter VIII. Of these, again, the destiny of those who fall from Yoga has been mentioned in verses 40 to 45 of Chapter VI. There it is stated that casting off their mortal coil they ascend to heaven and other worlds and, having enjoyed the pleasures of these

celestial regions for a pretty long period, are reborn in the house of wealthy people of pious conduct. Or, without being temporarily transferred to heaven they are directly reborn in a Yogi's family and, driven once more to the practice of Yoga by the impulse of their previous Sādhana, attain the supreme goal.

The destiny of those who perform prescribed duties or worship with an interested motive has been described in verses 20 and 21 of Chapter IX; there it has been shown how those who perform sacrifices etc. prescribed in the Vedas with a desire to attain heaven ascend to that region, and how, on the stock of their merit being exhausted, they are hurled back to the mortal plane. The route and the process of their ascent to heaven have been delineated in the commentary on verse 25 of Chapter VIII above.

Verses 14, 15 and 18 of Chapter XIV briefly describe in a general way the destiny of all men. When a man gives up the ghost during the preponderance of the quality of Sattva, he attains to the higher worlds; dying when Rajas is in the ascendant, one is born among men; and he who expires during the predominance of Tamas is born in the species of birds, beasts, insects, moths and trees etc. Even so a man established in Sattva ascends after death to the higher regions; men of a Rajasic disposition who are established in Rajas remain in the world of mortals; and men of a Tamasic temperament who are established in Tamas descend in the scale of spiritual evolution, *i. e.*, are cast into hell or born in sub-human species. In verses 19 to 20 of Chapter XVI the Lord says, with reference to Tamasic men of a demoniac disposition, that He repeatedly throws them into demoniac wombs, *i. e.*,

the species of low born creatures like dogs and swine etc., and subsequent to this they are cast into terrible hells. Similarly, in other places too the Gītā speaks of men attaining good or evil destiny according to their qualities and actions. The destiny of liberated souls has been described at length at many places in the shape of the goal of the Paths of Knowledge and Action.

SOME SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE GĪTĀ

(1) MEANS OF TESTING THE PREDOMINANCE OF GUNAS

The Gītā has laid down certain definite standards of judging whether a particular object, idea or action belongs to the Sattvic, Rajasic or Tamasic type. They are as follows:—

(1) An idea or action which is untainted with selfishness, which is free from attachment and the sense of 'mine', and which is conducive to God-Realization, should be regarded as Sattvic.

(2) An idea or action which is tainted with greed, selfishness and attachment, and which yields momentary pleasure and ultimately leads to sorrow, should be regarded as Rajasic.

(3) An idea or action which is characterized by violence, infatuation and obstinate error, and which leads to sorrow and ignorance, should be regarded as Tamasic.

Thus pointing out the distinguishing marks of ideas and actions of the Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic types, the Lord enjoins us all to adopt those of the Sattvic type and discard those of the other two types.

(2) PREDOMINANCE OF SPIRIT OVER ACTION IN THE GĪTĀ

Although the Gītā recognizes good conduct and a noble spirit both as conducive

to blessedness, it lays emphasis on the spirit or one's mental attitude. In the marks of a stable-minded Yogī, a devotee and a Guṇātīta (one who has transcended the three Guṇas) given at the end of Chapters II, XII and XIV respectively, it is the spirit that has been emphasized (II. 55-71; XII. 13-19; XIV. 22-25). In Chapters II and XIV, Arjuna's question has particular reference to conduct, but the Lord's reply lays emphasis on the spirit. In the eyes of the Gītā, most ordinary pursuits such as fighting, trade, agriculture and menial service etc., done in a disinterested spirit, are superior to noblest acts like sacrifice, charity, penance, public service and worship etc., done with an interested motive, inasmuch as the former are conducive to liberation (II. 40, 49; XII. 12; XVIII. 46). In Chapter IV too, which enunciates various practices in the form of so many sacrifices (IV. 24-32), liberation has been shown to depend primarily on the spirit of the sacrificer.

GĪTĀ AND THE VEDAS

The Gītā shows great regard for the Vedas. By declaring Himself as worthy of being known by the Vedas, as the author of the Vedānta and the knower of the Vedas, the Lord enhances their glory to a great extent (XV. 15). While speaking of the Peepul tree in the shape of creation, the Lord says that he alone who knows "this tree with its roots in essence really knows the truth of the Vedas." (XV. 1.) The Lord shows thereby that the intention of the Vedas is to reveal the true character of the world together with its cause, viz., God. The Lord says that He simply reiterates what the Vedas have stated by the analytical process. Thus citing the Vedas as authority in support of His utterances, the Lord has

exalted the Vedas to the skies. By declaring the three Vedas—Ṛk, Yajus and Sama—as His own selves He has accorded them a still greater honour. The Lord states that the Vedas have proceeded from Him (III. 15; XVII. 23). He further says that various means to God-Realization have been taught in the Vedas (IV. 32). Thereby He clearly indicates as it were that the Vedas do not merely enunciate practices which bring enjoyment in the world—as some unthinking men hold, but that they set forth, not one or two, but numerous ways to God-Realization. While referring to His Reality as the "supreme Goal", the Lord says that knowers of the Vedas term It as 'Akṣara' or the syllable OM (VIII. 11). By this statement too the Lord conveys the same idea, viz., that the Vedas do not merely speak of the transient enjoyments of this world and of heaven, which are the goal of men who are motivated by desire, but that they discuss at length the imperishable Reality of God as well. This makes it clear that the Lord has shown exceptional esteem and regard for the Vedas.

This raises the question: Why, then, did the Lord speak slightly of the Vedas at several places? For example, He has spoken of men obsessed by desire as devoted to the letter of the Vedas and unwise (II. 42). Again, declaring the Vedas as dealing with the evolutes of the three Guṇas in the form of worldly enjoyments, as well as with the means of attaining such enjoyments, He has advised Arjuna to remain unattached to them (II. 45). And referring to men who are motivated by desire and devoted to the ritual enjoined by the three Vedas, the Lord says that they repeatedly come and

ge, and do not escape from the whirligig of birth and death (IX. 21). What are we to understand from the above?

Our reply to the above question is that, although the observations of the Lord referred to above appear to decry the Vedas, really speaking they do not. The Gita values absolute desirelessness on the part of a doer or a worshipper much more than an interested spirit, and has declared the former as indispensable for God-Realization. Hence it is with a view to declaring a selfish motive with regard to one's actions or worship as lower than absolute desirelessness and as conducive to momentary sense-enjoyments, that the Lord has off and on proved it to be of no consequence; but He has nowhere denounced such spirit just as He has denounced prohibited acts. Even where He speaks of one's transcending the fruits held out by the Vedas, He only refers to the fruits of actions performed with an interested motive. Thus it is clear that nowhere in the Gita does the Lord decry the Vedas; on the other hand, He has only extolled them every now and then.

GĪTA AND THE SCHOOLS OF SĀNKHYA AND YOGA

Some people hold the view that wherever the word 'Sāṅkhya' occurs in the Gita it stands for the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy founded by Mahārṣi Kapila; but this does not appear to be a reasonable view. In three consecutive verses (Verses 19, 20 and 21) of Chapter XIII, and elsewhere too, the Gita uses the words 'Prakṛti' and 'Puruṣa' together, and these are the two principal words of the Sāṅkhya terminology; this has led people to conclude that the Gita upholds the doctrine of Sāṅkhya

taught by Kapila. Similarly, some people interpret the word 'Yoga' too as referring to the school of philosophy of that name founded by Mahārṣi Patañjali. At the beginning of Chapter V, and at many other places too, the words 'Sāṅkhya' and 'Yoga' have been used together; this has also contributed to the assumption that the words 'Sāṅkhya' and 'Yoga' respectively stand for the philosophical systems of those names attributed to sages Kapila and Patañjali. But the view does not appear to be supported by reason. The 'Sāṅkhya' referred to in the Gita is not the same as the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy associated with the name of Kapila, nor is the 'Yoga' spoken of in the Gita the same as the Yoga of Patañjali. This will be clear from the following:—

(1) The Sāṅkhya system of philosophy refuses to recognize God as conceived by the Gita.

(2) Although the word 'Prakṛti' occurs at several places in the Gita, there is a world of difference between 'Prakṛti' as conceived by the Gita and the 'Prakṛti' of Sāṅkhya. According to the Sāṅkhya philosophy as taught by Kapila, 'Prakṛti' denotes a state of equilibrium of the three Guṇas. But the 'Prakṛti' of the Gita is the cause of the three Guṇas, which are its evolutes (XIV. 5). Sāṅkhya recognizes Prakṛti as without beginning and eternal; the Gita does hold it to be without beginning (XIII. 19), but not eternal.

(3) Similarly, there is a great difference between 'Puruṣa' as conceived by the Gita and the 'Puruṣa' of the Sāṅkhya philosophy. According to Sāṅkhya, Puruṣas are many; but 'Sāṅkhya' as preached by the Gita recognizes only one Puruṣa (XIII. 22, 30; XVIII. 20).

(4) The Gītā's conception of 'Mukti' also widely differs from 'Mukti' as taught by the Sāṅkhya system. According to the latter, Mukti or liberation consists in the final cessation of sorrow. In the 'Mukti' of the Gītā, however, there is not only final cessation of sorrow but in addition to it there is realization of God; who is an embodiment of supreme Bliss (VI. 21-22).

(5) Besides the above doctrinal differences, the Yoga system of Patañjali defines 'Yoga' as the cessation of the functions of the mind. The Gītā, however, uses the word 'Yoga' in different senses according to the context in which it occurs (*vide* commentary to II. 53).

Thus there is a great difference between the teachings of the Gītā, on the one hand, and the teachings of the Sāṅkhya and Yoga schools of philosophy, on the other.

APOLOGY FOR THE PRESENT COMMENTARY

For many years past some friends have pressed me, and tried to prevail upon me, to write a detailed commentary on the Gītā according to my own ideas. Already there exist a number of glosses, commentaries and expositions on the Gītā by revered Achāryas or world-teachers, saints and holy men, as well as by savants possessing deep insight into the Śāstras. They are all worthy of respectful consideration, and have attempted to bring to light the secrets of the Gītā according to their own respective standpoints. But most of them are in Sanskrit and are particularly useful to men of learning. Therefore, the friends argued that a commentary should be written in a simple language, which may be of use to all, and may be comprehended by the common run of people, and which may

contain a detailed exposition of the teachings of the Gītā. With this end in view, and believing that the writer himself would be benefited the most by such an undertaking, the work was taken in hand. But experience showed that the task was far more difficult than it appeared to be in the beginning.

I am conscious of the fact that from the points of view both of ability and qualification, this attempt on my part will be regarded as nothing short of a daring act. By caste I am a Vaiśya, and in point of learning and wisdom too I find myself wholly unequal to the undertaking. Thus I am altogether unqualified to write a commentary on a universally respected scripture like the Gītā. As regards the meaning of the Gītā, far from claiming a full understanding of the teachings of the Lord, it would be too presumptuous on my part to say that I have understood even a hundredth part of their import. And having grasped their meaning even to a small degree it is all the more difficult to translate them into practice. Those alone who are specially favoured by the Lord can undertake to do so. Practice in life of all those teachings in their entirety is indeed a far cry; even they are really blessed, who have moulded their lives according to a stray verse of the Gītā dealing with spiritual practice; and I bow crores of times to their sacred feet. Such persons alone possess the requisite qualification even to interpret the Gītā.

Thus, from all points of view, the present attempt on my part is a daring enterprise and sheer childishness. Nevertheless, it has provided me an opportunity to devote some thought to the meaning of the Gītā, to reflect on the divine teachings

of the Lord and to discuss spiritual topics; and these moments of my life have been spent in the best way possible, for which I consider myself blessed. This has no doubt contributed to advance my knowledge of the Gītā and has also served to correct many errors; nonetheless, it may be safely presumed that I have erred at every step in the course of this undertaking. For whether I have understood even a hundredth part of the teachings of the Gītā cannot be definitely said. The real import of the Gītā is known in its entirety only to the Lord Himself, and to a certain extent to Arjuna, for whom the Gītā was intended. Or, even those who have actually realized God, and have fully actualized in life the grace of God, may partially know it. What more can I say on this subject? I, for my part, am deeply obliged and indebted to all those revered souls who have written glosses and commentaries on the Gītā; for in shaping the present commentary, I have taken great help from a number of those glosses and commentaries. Therefore, with a heart full of gratitude, I offer, again and again, my humble obeisances to those adorable souls.

With regard to this commentary, of course, I can unhesitatingly say that it is full of imperfections. Far from correctly interpreting the intention of the Lord, I may have misconstrued it myself at several places, and in many places I may have represented the very reverse of what the Lord intended to say. For all these errors, I apologize with folded hands both to the merciful Lord and to all lovers of the Gītā. Whatever I have written,

I have written according to my own poor lights; and I hope men of learning and wisdom will pardon me for the childishness I have exhibited through this indication of my poor understanding. In the present commentary, I have neither referred to the views of any Āchārya or commentator, nor criticized any. But while stating my own point of view, I may have said something which may conflict with the views of any, for which I seek forgiveness from all. It has not been my object to enter into controversy, or compare one point of view with another.

As far as possible, care has been taken to avoid inconsistency between what has gone before and what follows; but inasmuch as the commentary has assumed unwieldy proportions, it is not unlikely that mistakes of this type may have escaped notice. I humbly hope that the generous reader will kindly rectify all such errors and inform me about the same.

In writing this commentary, I received invaluable help from several revered personages, friends and relatives. Modern etiquette demands that I should mention them all by name. But if I proceed to do so, I would be hurting their feelings in the first instance; and secondly my relations with them are of such an intimate nature that any praise offered to them is as good as self-praise. Therefore, without mentioning any of them by name, I consider it enough to say that but for their ungrudging co-operation the commentary would not perhaps have seen the light of the day as it is.

—Jayadayal Goyandka

Kalyana-Kalpataru

The Four Evils
(Birth, Old age, Disease and Death)



जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥ (XIII. 8.)



The Bhagavadgita

Chapter XIII

The 'Kṣetra' (body) and the 'Kṣetrajña' (soul) are entirely different from each other. It is only due to ignorance that they are being identified as it were.

Title of the
Chapter

The 'Kṣetra' is material, mutable, transitory and perishable; whereas the 'Kṣetrajña' (knower of the Kṣetra) is conscious, of the same essence as Knowledge, immutable, eternal and imperishable. In the present chapter, both the 'Kṣetra' and the 'Kṣetrajña' have been differentiated in the above manner. Hence it has been given the name of "The Yoga of discrimination between the 'Kṣetra' and the knower of the Kṣetra."

The opening verse of this chapter defines what is 'Kṣetra' (body) and what is 'Kṣetrajña' (soul). Establishing the identity of the soul with the Oversoul,

Summary of the
Chapter

verse 2 declares Wisdom to consist precisely in the knowledge of the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña. Undertaking, in the third, to describe the nature and characteristics etc. of the Kṣetra, as well as the nature and glory of the Kṣetrajña, and citing in the fourth the authority of the seers, the Vedas and the *Brahmasūtras*, the Lord discusses in the fifth and the sixth verses the nature of the Kṣetra and its evolutes. Verses 7 to 11 enumerate twenty Sattvic traits and moral virtues such as 'absence of pride' etc., under the name of 'Jñāna' or wisdom, so called because they lead to the realization of Truth. Thereafter describing in verses 12 to 17 the nature of the Oversoul, which is capable of being realized through Knowledge, the Lord enumerates in verse 18 the topics discussed up to that point, and declares God-Realization to be the fruit of 'Knowledge' as discussed in this context. Then, taking up another topic under the head of 'Prakṛti' (Matter) and 'Puruṣa' (Spirit), verses 19 to 22 discuss the nature of Matter and its evolutes, on the one hand, and the nature of and the truth about the Puruṣa or Spirit, on the other. Pointing out in the twenty-third the reward of knowing Prakṛti with its three Guṇas as well as the Puruṣa, the Lord describes in the twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth the various means of God-Realization. Declaring in the twenty-sixth the emanation of all beings, moving as well as motionless, from the union of the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña, or Matter and Spirit, the Lord brings out in verses 27 to 30 the glory as well as the reward of realizing the truth that "God dwells equally in all, that He is imperishable and a non-doer, and that all actions are done only by Nature, and that everything is a projection from the divine principle and abides in It."

Driving home, from the thirty-first to the thirty-third, the glory of the Self and showing by the use of similes the non-agency and uncontaminated nature of the Soul, the Lord finally declares, in the thirty-fourth, God-Realization as the reward of knowing the distinction between the 'Kṣetra' and the 'Kṣetrajña'.

In the opening verse of Chapter XII Arjuna asked the Lord about the comparative merit of the worshippers of God with attributes, on the one hand, and of those of God without attributes on the other. In reply to this query the Lord, while briefly showing in verse 2 the superiority of those who worship God with attributes, discussed from the third to the fifth the character and reward of the worship of the Absolute and the strain and stress involved in such worship in the case of those who are centred in the body. Thereafter, verses 6 to 20 discussed the glory, reward and process of worship of God with attributes and the marks of the devotees of God, and this brought the chapter to a close. The truth, glory and the means to the realization of the Absolute could not, however, be elaborately dealt with. Therefore, the truth relating to the absolute, formless God, or the subject of Jñānayoga, is being taken up for elaborate discussion in the present chapter. The beginning is made with a definition of 'Kṣetra' (body) and 'Kṣetrajña' (soul).

श्रीभगवानुवाच

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।

एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥ १ ॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kunti, Arjuna; इदम् this; शरीरम् body; क्षेत्रम् इति as the Kṣetra (Field); अभिधीयते is termed; एतत् it; यः who; वेत्ति knows; तम् him; क्षेत्रज्ञ इति as the Kṣetrajña (Knower of the Field); तद्विदः knowers of the truth about them; प्राहुः speak of.

Śrī Bhagavān said: This body, Arjuna, is termed as the Field (Kṣetra); and him who knows it, the sages discerning the truth about both refer to as the knower of the Field (Kṣetrajña). (1)

The use of the demonstrative adjective 'Idam' with reference to 'Śarīram' shows that the body is perceived and known by the soul; hence it is objective, and thus entirely different from the Self, who is the subject. And just as seeds sown in a field yield the corresponding crop in course of time, even so seeds of Karma sown in the body yield their fruit at the appointed time. Hence the body is called the 'Field'. Besides this, it is subject to constant decay. That is another reason why it is called the 'Kṣetra' (from the root 'Kṣi' to decay); and that is why it is spoken of as the 'Kṣara' (perishable) Puruṣa in Chapter XV. The denotation of 'Kṣetra' has been given in a nutshell in verse 5 of this chapter. The latter half of this verse points to the inner Self, who is

the subject. The entire range of objective reality, which is open to knowledge, such as the mind, intellect, the senses, the elements and the objects of senses—all these are material in their constitution, perishable and subject to change. The conscious Self is wholly different from the aforesaid material world of objective reality. It is the knower and lord of the latter and runs through it. That is why it is spoken of as the 'Kṣetrajña' or knower of the Field. It is this knowing conscious Self who is referred to as 'Parā Prakṛti' or the Higher Nature in Chapter VII, as 'Adhyātma' or the Spirit in VIII.3 and as the 'Akṣara Puruṣa' or Indestructible Soul in XV.16. This spiritual substance is a great mystery; that is why the Lord speaks of it in

different contexts, now in the feminine gender, now in the neuter and a third time in the masculine gender. In reality, the soul is entirely free from all modifications, sex-less, eternal, changeless and conscious—of the same essence as Knowledge.

The pronoun 'Tat', forming part of the compound word 'Tadvidah', stands for both the 'Kṣetra' and the 'Kṣetrajña'. Hence the word 'Tadvidah' refers to those who fully know both in their real character. The use of this word is intended to show that the appellation 'Kṣetrajña' has been given to the soul by sages who have realized the truth; hence there is no room for entertaining any doubt with regard to the nature of the soul.

Defining thus the words 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña', the Lord now establishes the identity of the soul with the Oversoul and defines Knowledge.

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ।

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम ॥ २ ॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; सर्वक्षेत्रेषु in all the Kṣetras or living organisms; क्षेत्रज्ञम् the Kṣetrajña or Self; अपि too; माम् Myself; विद्धि know; च and; क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोः of the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña, (i. e., of Matter with its evolutes and the Spirit); यत् ज्ञानम् that which is knowledge; तत् that (is); ज्ञानम् wisdom or spiritual enlightenment; मम मतम् (that is) My view.

Know Myself to be the Kṣetrajña (individual soul) also in all the Kṣetras, Arjuna. And it is the knowledge of Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña (i. e., of Matter with its evolutes and the Spirit) which I consider as Wisdom. (2)

The first half of this verse establishes the identity of the soul with the Oversoul. As a matter of fact, there is no difference whatsoever between the soul and the Oversoul. The apparent difference is due to the association of the soul with matter. That is why while describing the characteristics of absolute, formless God in XII. 3, the Lord uses almost the same terminology as He did in II. 24-25 while describing the character of

the Self. What the Lord seeks to impress upon Arjuna is that the Kṣetrajña or the conscious soul seated in all the Kṣetras, being a particle of His own Self (XV. 7), is not, in reality, different from Him; that it is God Himself who appears as the Jivātmā or individual soul.

The first half of this verse could as well be interpreted to mean that side by side with the individual soul the Over-

soul also dwells in all the Kṣetras as the inner witness, in which case the sentence would have to be translated as under: "Know the Kṣetrajñā (individual soul), as well as Myself, as dwelling in all Kṣetras or bodies." Such an interpretation would have been quite in order in a context where the emphasis was on Devotion. In the present context, however, the main theme is Jñāna or Self-Realization; Bhakti or Devotion figures here only as a means to the attainment of Knowledge. Hence Bhakti has been assigned a secondary place in the scheme of this Chapter. Therefore, the way in which we have interpreted the verse as bringing out the identity of the soul with

the Oversoul appears to be the correct interpretation.

The 'Kṣetra' or body is liable to appear and disappear, material in constitution, transient, coming within the purview of knowledge and ephemeral. The 'Kṣetrajñā' or soul, on the other hand, is the eternal and conscious subject, immutable, stainless and ever existing in the same state of being. Hence the two are entirely different from one another; it is ignorance alone which makes them appear as identical. In the opinion of the Lord, true Knowledge or wisdom consists in the realization of this truth. There is no room for doubt or error in this view.

The truth about the 'Kṣetra' and the 'Kṣetrajñā' being fully known, the delusion in the form of this world disappears and God-Realization takes place; therefore, in order to bring out distinctly the ideas of 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajñā', the Lord says:—

तत्क्षेत्रं यच्च यादृक्च यद्विकारि यतश्च यत् ।

स च यो यत्प्रभावश्च तत्समासेन मे शृणु ॥ ३ ॥

तत् that; क्षेत्रम् Kṣetra or body; यत् what; च and; यादृक् what like; च and (again); यद्विकारि with what evolves; च and (further); यतः whence; यत् (is) what; च and (finally); सः that (Kṣetrajñā or soul); यः who; च and; यत्प्रभावः possessed of what glory; तत् (all) that; समासेन in brief; मे from Me; शृणु hear.

What that Kṣetra is and what it is like, and also what are its evolves, again, whence is what, and also finally who that Kṣetrajñā is and what his glory—hear all this from Me in a nutshell. (3)

The use of the demonstrative adjective 'Tat' before 'Kṣetram', in this verse, is intended to show that the present verse undertakes to give further particulars about the 'Kṣetra' as defined in verse 1; while the relative adjective 'Yat', used as a predicate in relation to the substantive 'Kṣetram', conveys the intention of the Lord to reveal the denotation of 'Kṣetra', which has been given in verse 5 below. Again, the qualifying word 'Yādr̥k', used with

reference to 'Kṣetram', conveys the intention of the Lord to tell us what such 'Kṣetra' is like, and this has been pointed out in verses 26 and 27 of this chapter by declaring all created beings as liable to appear and disappear.

The evolves of 'Kṣetra', referred to in the compound adjective 'Yadvikāri', have been enumerated in verse 6 of this chapter,

The words 'Yataḥ Yat' (whence is what) convey the intention of the Lord to trace the origin of the various categories brought together under the common name of 'Kṣetra', and this has been done in the second half of verse 19 and the first half of verse 20.

The demonstrative pronoun 'Saḥ' in the second half of this verse refers to the 'Kṣetrajña' and the relative adjective 'Yat', used as a predicate in relation to it conveys the intention of the Lord to reveal its true character. This has been declared by the Lord as twofold, viz., (1) rooted in matter,

and (2) existing in its real state. For example, speaking of it as 'without beginning' in verse 19, as 'undergoing pleasurable and painful experiences' in the twentieth, and as 'taking good and evil birth' in the twenty-first, the Lord refers to the spirit as rooted in matter; while verse 22 and verses 27 to 30, revealing its identity with the Oversoul, refer to its real character.

The glory of the soul, referred to in the compound adjective 'Yat-prabhāvaḥ' has been described in verses 31 to 33 of this chapter.

The Lord now expresses His regard for the Ṛṣis, the Vedas and the Brahmasūtras by quoting their authority on the subject of 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña', which He has just now undertaken to discuss in brief.

ऋषिभिर्बहुधा गीतं छन्दोभिर्विविधैः पृथक् ।
ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैश्चैव हेतुमद्भिर्विनिश्चितैः ॥ ४ ॥

ऋषिभिः by the Ṛṣis or seers; बहुधा in manifold ways; गीतम् (the truth about the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña or Matter and Spirit) has been expounded; विविधैः छन्दोभिः in different Vedic chants; पृथक् (has been stated) separately; च and; विनिश्चितैः हेतुमद्भिः ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैः (discussed) in the conclusive and reasoned texts of the *Brahmasūtras*; एव as well.

The truth about the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña has been expounded by the seers in manifold ways; again, it has been separately stated in different Vedic chants and also in the conclusive and reasoned texts of the *Brahmasūtras*. (4)

The ancient seers, to whom the Vedic chants have been revealed, and who are the accredited authors of other scriptures and Smṛti texts, have expounded in detail and in various ways the true meaning of 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña' and all matters connected with them in the Smṛtis as well as in the Epics and Purāṇas. The sum and substance of what the Ṛṣis have said on the subject has been succinctly stated by the Lord in the following verses,

The word 'Chhandobhiḥ', with the adjective 'Vividhaiḥ' qualifying it, refers to the four Vedas, Ṛk, Yajus, Sāma and Atharva, including the Saṃhitā or hymnical texts as well as the exegetical portion, known by the name of the Brāhmaṇas. All the Upaniṣads should also be regarded as included in the same. The truth regarding the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña, stated in a nutshell in this chapter by the Lord, has been expounded at length at several places and in diverse

ways in those sacred scriptures.

The compound word 'Brahmasūtra-padaih' obviously refers to the famous "Aphorisms on Vedānta" by sage Bādarāyaṇa, opening with 'Athāto Brahma-jijñāsā' (Now commences the enquiry into Brahma or the Absolute), inasmuch as the qualifications used with the word

fit in quite well with this work. The latter half of the verse thus shows that the Lord is also giving here in a nutshell the very essence of the reasoned exposition contained in the *Brahmasūtras* of the truth about the 'Kṣetra' and the 'Kṣetrajña', originally discussed in the Vedas and Smṛti-texts.

Citing thus the authority of the seers, the Vedas and the Brahmasūtras, the Lord now speaks, in the following two verses, of the 'Kṣetra' as well as its evolutes, referred to in verse 3 above by the words 'Yat' and 'Yadvikāri' respectively.

महाभूतान्यहंकारो बुद्धिरव्यक्तमेव च ।
इन्द्रियाणि दशैकं च पञ्च चेन्द्रियगोचराः ॥ ५ ॥*

महाभूतानि the five elements; अहंकारः the ego; बुद्धिः the intellect; च and; अव्यक्तम् the Unmanifest or Primordial Matter; एव as well; च even so; दश इन्द्रियाणि the ten organs (of perception and action); एकम् the one mind; च and; पञ्च इन्द्रियगोचराः the five objects of sense.

The five elements, the ego, the intellect, the Unmanifest (Primordial Matter), the ten organs (of perception and action), the mind, and the five objects of sense (sound, touch, colour, taste and smell);— (5)

* Statements similar to this are met with both in the *Sāṅkhyakārikā* of Īśwarakṛṣṇa and the *Yoga-sūtras* of sage Patañjali e. g.,

मूलप्रकृतिरविकृतिर्महदायाः प्रकृतिविकृतयः सप्त । षोडशकस्तु विकारो न प्रकृतिर्न विकृतिः पुरुषः ॥

(*Sāṅkhyakārikā*, 3)

There is one Primordial Matter, which is the effect of none. The Mahat-Tattva, (the principle of Cosmic Intelligence), Ahankāra or the Ego and the five Tanmātrās (the principles of sound, touch, colour, taste and smell)—these seven are both causes and effects; they are the causes of the five elements and the effects of Primordial Matter. The eleven Indriyas consisting of the five senses of perception, the five organs of action and the mind, and the five gross elements—these sixteen are mere effects; they are not the causes of any other effect. Of these the eleven Indriyas are the effects of the ego, while the five gross elements are the evolutes of the five Tanmātrās. Puruṣa or the Spirit, however, is neither the cause nor the effect of anything else. He is altogether unattached.

In the *Yoga-Sūtras* we read:—विशेषाविशेषलिङ्गमात्रालिङ्गानि गुणपदार्थाणि (II, 19.) "The Viśeṣas, that is, the five senses of perception, the five organs of action, the mind and the five gross elements; the Avīśeṣas, that is, the ego and the five Tanmātrās; the Liṅgamātra, that is, the Mahat-Tattva; and the Alinga or Primordial Matter—these twenty-four categories represent the varying phases of the Guṇas. They are called 'Dr̥śya' or objective existences.

What has been termed as 'Dr̥śya' in the *Yoga-Sūtras*, has been referred to as the 'Kṣetra' in the *Gītā*,

The word 'Mahābhūtāni' in this verse refers to the five Tanmātrās or the subtle states of the five elements, which are the causes of the five gross elements as well as of objects of perception, viz., sound, etc., and which have been enumerated in Chapter VII above under the names of 'Bhūmi' (earth), 'Āpaḥ' (water), 'Anala' (fire), 'Vāyu' (air) and 'Kha' (ether).

'Ahankāra' or the Ego is an aspect of the cosmic Mind. It is the cause of the five Tanmātrās, the mind and all the senses, and is an effect of the Mahat-Tattva. It is also known as the principle of 'I-ness' (the feeling of 'I').

'Buddhi', also known as the Mahat-Tattva and Cosmic Intelligence, is an aspect of the cosmic Mind, and represents the faculty of determination or judgment.

The word 'Avyakta' (Unmanifest) stands for Primordial Matter, which is the cause of all categories from Mahat-Tattva onwards, and is known by the

name of 'Pradhāna' in Sāṅkhya philosophy, and which has been referred to as 'Mahad Brahma' in Chapter XIV and as 'Prakṛti' in verse 19 of the present chapter.

The tongue, hands, and feet, the generative organ and the organ of defecation—these are the five organs of action; while the senses of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell constitute the five senses of perception. These are the ten Indriyas referred to in the latter half of this verse. The principle of Ego or Ahankāra is the cause of them all.

The word 'Ekam' stands for the mind, which represents the cogitative faculty of the cosmic Mind, and whose function is to reflect and speculate. This is also an evolute of the Ego.

Sound, touch, colour, taste and smell, which are the objects of the five senses of perception, are denoted by the words 'Pañcha Indriyagocharāḥ'.

इच्छा द्वेषः सुखं दुःखं संघातश्चेतना धृतिः ।

एतत्क्षेत्रं समासेन सविकारमुदाहृतम् ॥ ६ ॥

इच्छा desire; द्वेषः aversion; सुखम् pleasure; दुःखम् pain; संघातः the physical body; चेतना consciousness; धृतिः (and) firmness; सविकारम् inclusive of evolutes; एतत् this; क्षेत्रम् Kṣetra; समासेन briefly; उदाहृतम् has been stated.

Also desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, the physical body, consciousness, firmness: thus is the Kṣetra, with its evolutes, briefly stated. (6)

The word 'Itchhā' in this verse denotes a passionate longing for the acquisition of an object which one regards as a source of gratification and as relieving one's pain. There are various phases of this longing, which are covered by such expressions as desire, thirst, hope, craving, yearning etc. It is a modification of the mind; hence it has been reckoned as an evolute of the 'Kṣetra'.

Antipathy towards a thing which one conceives to be a source of pain or as

interfering with one's pleasure or comfort is called Dweṣa. Animosity, jealousy, hatred, anger etc. are some of its gross forms. This is also a modification of the mind. Hence it has been counted as an evolute of the 'Kṣetra'.

The pleasurable feeling aroused in the mind by the presence of that which is agreeable and the disappearance of that which is disagreeable is called Sukha. Being a modification of the mind,

it is also regarded as an evolute of the 'Kṣetra'.

The agony caused in the mind by the presence of that which is disagreeable and the disappearance of that which is agreeable is called 'Duḥkha'. This too represents a modification of the mind and as such has been recognized as an evolute of the 'Kṣetra'.

'Sanghāta' here stands for the corporeal or physical body, composed of the five gross elements, which is left behind, open to the view of all, even on the departure of the subtle body after death. Being a modification of the five gross elements stated above, it has also been regarded as an evolute of the 'Kṣetra'.

The word 'Chetanā' signifies consciousness or the cognizing faculty of the mind,

by which we feel pleasure and pain and cognize all other objects, and which has already been mentioned in X. 22. Being a faculty of the mind, it has also been counted as an evolute of the 'Kṣetra'.

'Dhṛti' denotes 'firmness'. It is the same quality which has been mentioned in XVIII. 33, 34 and 35 as of three kinds, viz., Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic, and the Sattvic type of which has been included in the divine virtues enumerated in XVI. 3. Being a modification of the mind, it has also been recognized as an evolute of the 'Kṣetra'.

Thus far have the 'Kṣetra' and its evolutes been briefly mentioned, the former in verse 5 and the latter in the present one. This is what the Lord seeks to convey through the last quarter of the above verse.

Speaking thus of the nature of the 'Kṣetra' and its evolutes, the Lord now enumerates in the next five verses, under the name of 'Jñāna', the virtues which make for Jñāna or spiritual wisdom, which has been declared in verse 2 above as consisting in the knowledge of the 'Kṣetra' and the 'Kṣetrajña'.

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिराजवम् ।

आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥ ७ ॥

अमानित्वम् absence of pride; अदम्भित्वम् freedom from hypocrisy; अहिंसा non-violence or non-infliction of pain on any creature whatsoever; क्षान्तिः forbearance; राजवम् straightness of body, speech and mind; आचार्योपासनम् devout service of the preceptor; शौचम् purity (both internal and external); स्थैर्यम् steadfastness of mind; आत्मविनिग्रहः (and) control of body, mind and the senses.

Absence of pride, freedom from hypocrisy, non-violence, forbearance, straightness of body, speech and mind, devout service of the preceptor, internal and external purity, steadfastness of mind and control of body, mind and the senses. (7)

'Mānitva' or self-esteem consists in looking upon oneself as an eminent person, and an object of reverence and worship or a towering personality, and coveting honour, fame, respect and adoration from others, or feeling delighted when all these come unasked for,

And absence of all this is 'Amānitva' or absence of pride. Far from rejoicing when honour, respect and worship etc. are offered to him, the man who has fully developed this virtue feels disgusted with all these and grows indifferent towards them.

'Dambhitva' consists in exhibiting oneself as a devout or charitably-disposed man, a devotee, one possessed of spiritual enlightenment, or a saint, and in simulating piety, generosity, liberality, devotion to God, practice of Yoga and observance of religious vows and fasts etc. or any other virtue for the sake of honour, prestige and worship etc., out of greed for wealth or with the object of deceiving others. And 'Adambhitvam' denotes complete absence of 'Dambhitva'. Being entirely free from the desire for honour and fame, the man who has fully developed this virtue feels shy even in making known to others his genuine pious sentiments, noble virtues and devotional practices. It is, therefore, out of question for him to display virtues which he does not actually possess.

'Ahimsā' means total abstention from violence or infliction of pain in any form or shape on any creature whatsoever through body, speech or mind, e.g., harbouring ill-will towards another in one's mind; abusing or vilifying another, using harsh language, or uttering unpleasant and harmful words with reference to another; and dealing a physical blow or causing hurt to another or inflicting injury in any form whatsoever on others. The practicant who has fully developed 'Ahimsā' ceases to bear enmity or ill-will towards anyone; therefore no harm is ever done by him to any creature whatsoever, nor is anyone eventually aggrieved by him, nor again does he actually cause fear to anyone. The great sage Patañjali goes so far as to say that even carnivorous animals living near him shed their natural animosities.*

'Kṣānti' means forbearance. He who has developed this quality never entertains the idea of punishing a wrong-doer even

indirectly. He nurses no thought of revenge, nor would he have the evil-doer punished for his wrongs here or hereafter. In fact, he refuses to recognize his faults as such, and wholly forgets them. The idea has been explained at some length in the commentary on X. 4.

'Ārjava' means straightness of mind, speech and behaviour. The practicant who has fully developed this quality has straight dealings with all; crookedness is entirely absent in him. In other words, his dealings are wholly free from artifice, duplicity or dishonesty. He is ever straight and above board.

He who imparts knowledge and teaches good precepts is called an Āchārya. Living with such a teacher and devoutly striving in every way with body, speech and mind to bring him happiness, making obeisance to him, obeying his commands and behaving in conformity with his wishes—all this is included in 'Āchāryopāsana'.

'Śauca' means purity. Purity of money is secured by honest and truthful dealings, while purity of diet is ensured by food procured through well-earned money. Conduct is purified by correct and appropriate behaviour, and the body is purified by cleaning it with water, earth etc. All this is external purity. Internal purity comes when the mind gets purged of all evils such as partiality and prejudice, chicanery and dissimulation etc. Both these forms of purity are covered by the term 'Śauca'.

'Sthairya' denotes firmness, i.e., remaining unshaken even in the face of the greatest trials and tribulations, danger or sorrow, swerving not an inch in any case from one's sacred obligation and duty under the influence of lust, anger, fear or greed, and the disappearance of all fickleness from the mind and intellect.

* अहिंसाप्रतिष्ठायां तत्संनिधौ वैरत्यागः । (Yoga-Sūtras II. 35)

The word 'Ātman', forming part of the compound word 'Ātmavinigraha', here stands for the body, including the mind and senses. 'Ātmavinigraha', therefore, means control over the mind, senses and the body. The mind, intellect and senses of the practicoant who has acquired complete mastery over his self act as his obedient servants; they can no longer entangle him into the cobweb of sensuous pleasures, and remain constantly engaged in spiritual practice according to his will.

इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहंकार एव च ।

जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥ ८ ॥

इन्द्रियार्थेषु towards the objects of enjoyment (of this world and the next); वैराग्यम् absence of attachment; च and; अनहंकारः absence of egotism; एव as well; जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् pondering again and again on the pain and evils inherent in birth, death, old age and disease etc.;

Dispassion towards the objects of enjoyment of this world and the next, and also absence of egotism, pondering again and again on the pain and evils inherent in birth, death, old age and disease; (8)

'Indriyārtheṣu Vairāgyam' denotes complete absence of attachment for all the objects of enjoyment of this world and the next in the form of sound, touch, colour, taste and smell, which are relished by the mind and the senses, and which though ignorantly regarded as a source of delight are really productive of sorrow.

'Anahankāra' means complete absence of identification with the mind, intellect and the body, which though other than the self are ignorantly regarded as the self.

The pangs of birth are no ordinary pangs. First of all, the helpless Jīva undergoes various forms of suffering, for a considerable length of time, in the womb of the mother. Then, during the process of birth, it has to suffer unbearable pain while coming out of the womb. The Jīva has to go through these pangs in the course of repeated births in the various species of beings. Death also involves terrible suffering to the Jīva. One has to leave under compulsion the body and the home which one has regarded as one's own for a whole life.

time. An idea of the agonies of death can be formed from the despondent looks and bodily suffering of a dying person. The sufferings of old age too are not negligible; the organs get enfeebled, the senses lose their power, the body becomes worn out; the mind is ever tossed by longings of various kinds, and one is reduced to a helpless condition. The hardships undergone in such a state are indeed terrible. Even so the agonies of ailment too are extremely painful. The body gets emaciated, sufferings of various kinds become unbearable and one has to depend on others for so many things. It is indeed a helpless state. These are the various forms of suffering inherent in birth, death, old age and disease.

Birth, death, old age and disease are undergone by Jīvas as a result of their sins. Hence they are all full of evils. Constantly dwelling on this idea is what is meant by seeing evils in them.

As a matter of fact, with the exception of the conscious Self there is nothing in this world which is free from these four evils. A house is built; this constitutes its birth; a part

of it is broken, this represents its diseased condition; the broken part is repaired, the evil is remedied; the house becomes old, this represents its old age; it is now past repairs. Reaching the state of dilapidation it collapses; this represents its death. All things, great and small, go through this process. Thus observing all objects of the world as subject to birth, death, old age and disease, one should cultivate dispassion towards them.

असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।
नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥ ९ ॥

पुत्रदारगृहादिषु to son, wife, home etc.; असक्तिः absence of attachment; अनभिष्वङ्गः absence of the feeling of mineness; च and; इष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु in favourable and unfavourable circumstances; नित्यम् समचित्तत्वम् constant equipoise of mind.

Absence of attachment and the feeling of mineness in respect of son, wife, home etc., and constant equipoise of mind both in favourable and unfavourable circumstances; (9)

Close association with one's wife and children, home and wealth etc. generally makes for special attachment to them. Even after one has developed dispassion towards ordinary objects of senses, this attachment for wife and son etc. often remains lurking behind. That is why absence of attachment for these has been separately and specially mentioned in this verse over and above dispassion towards objects of enjoyment, mentioned in verse 8 above, which ordinarily covers the absence of all forms of attachment.

The word 'Anabhiṣwanga' cannot be taken to mean 'absence of egotism' as the same has already been referred to in the preceding verse by the term 'Anahankāra'. It is the feeling of mineness which is responsible for close identification with one's wife and children etc. That is why the joys and sorrows, as well as the gain and loss, of the latter make one personally happy and unhappy.

This identification can be set aside only by overcoming the feeling of mineness. Hence the sense in which we have interpreted the word 'Anabhiṣwanga' seems to be the correct sense of the term.

Contact with agreeable persons, actions, events and objects and the disappearance of what is disagreeable is welcome (Iṣṭa) to all. Similarly, the disappearance of what is agreeable, and contact with what is disagreeable is 'unwelcome' (Aniṣṭa) to all. Absence of joy in the presence of what is agreeable and on the disappearance of what is disagreeable, and absence of grief, fear and anger in the presence of what is disagreeable and on the disappearance of what is agreeable, that is, remaining unmoved, even-tempered and equipoised under all circumstances—this is what is meant by 'equipoise of mind both in favourable and unfavourable circumstances'.

मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।
विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥ १० ॥

मयि to Me (the supreme Lord); अनन्ययोगेन through exclusive attachment of mind; अश्रमिचारिणी unflinching; भक्तिः devotion; च and; विविक्तदेशसेवित्वम् living in secluded and holy places; जनसंसदि in the company of men; अरतिः absence of enjoyment;

Unflinching devotion to Me through exclusive attachment, living in secluded and holy places, and finding no enjoyment in the company of men; (10)

'Ananyayoga' means getting exclusively united with God as the highest of all beings and as one's sole lord, worth resorting to, the supreme goal, the highest refuge, one's father, mother, brother and friend, the greatest benefactor, the nearest relation and everything, and treating nobody else as one's own. And cultivating steady, consummate and unadulterated love for God conceived as above and practising constant remembrance of and meditation on Him is what is meant by unflinching devotion to Him through exclusive attachment.

The man who practises such devotion ceases to have any trace of selfishness or egotism in him and he no longer claims anything belonging to this world as his own. He is connected with the world only through God, he ceases to have any direct relation with anybody. He views everything as belonging to God, and is constantly engaged in meditating on God in a disinterested spirit with reverence and love. Whatever he does, he does for the sake of God.

Any secluded, lonely and consecrated place, e. g., a temple or seat of religious austerity, the bank of a holy river

like the Ganges, a sacred woodland or mountain-cave etc., which is free from bustle and noise and is uninhabited by others, which when used as a residence evokes no objection and causes no vexation to others, which is free from dirt, refuse, pebbles and thorns, which has lovely natural surroundings, which has a salubrious climate and a holy atmosphere, which is free from infectious diseases, and is not infested by carnivorous animals, and which is free from violence and surcharged with Sattvic vibrations, is called 'Viviktadeśa'; and residing in such a place with the object of carrying on practices for Self-Realization is what is referred to here as 'Viviktadeśasevitvam'.

The word 'Janasamsadi' in the present context means the company of men steeped in error and attached to worldly enjoyments. And abhorring such company as a positive hindrance to spiritual life is what is meant by finding no enjoyment in the company of men. Association with saints, exalted souls and aspirants, on the other hand, is helpful to spiritual practice; therefore, 'Janasamsadi' should not be taken to refer to the company of such men.

अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ।

एतज्ज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा ॥ ११ ॥

अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वम् fixity in self-knowledge; तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् seeing (God as) the object of true knowledge; एतत् (all) this; ज्ञानम् (is) Knowledge; यत् (and) what (is); अतः than this; अन्यथा other; अज्ञानम् (is) ignorance; इति thus; प्रोक्तम् has been said.

Fixity in self-knowledge and seeing God as the object of true knowledge: all this is declared as Knowledge, and what is other than this is called ignorance. (11)

The Self or spirit is eternal, conscious, changeless and imperishable. All other objects which appear as perishable, material and subject to modification and change are not-Self; the Self has absolutely no relation with them. 'Adhyātma-Jñāna' or self-knowledge consists in thus realizing the truth of the Self through the scriptures and teachings of the preceptor. And conclusively determining this truth by the intellect, and dwelling on it constantly with the mind is what is meant by "fixity in self-knowledge".

The object of true knowledge is the integral Brahma or God, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified; for it is He who is realized through such knowledge. Constantly visualizing that transcendent Reality as equally present everywhere is what is meant by "seeing the object of true knowledge".

The virtues enumerated in the preceding verses, from 'Amānitvam' in verse 7 to 'Tattvajñānārthadarśanam' in the present one, are all conducive to the attainment of Knowledge; therefore they have also been given the name of Knowledge. The intention of this is to make it clear that the statement of the Lord contained in verse 2 above, viz., that the knowledge of 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña' is what He considers as true knowledge, should not lead the reader to think that having understood that 'Kṣetra' stands for the body and

'Kṣetrajña' denotes the indwelling subject or self, he has attained true knowledge. On the other hand, true knowledge is that which follows the realization of the truth about 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña' attained through the practice of the twenty virtues mentioned above. It is in order to reveal this truth to the reader that these virtues have been declared as synonymous with Knowledge. Thus an enlightened soul must possess these virtues from the very start. It is, however, not indispensable that all these qualities should appear simultaneously in all practicants. Of course, many of these virtues, which are useful to all, e.g., absence of pride, freedom from hypocrisy etc., are invariably present in every case. Other virtues, such as 'unflinching devotion', 'living in seclusion', 'fixity in self-knowledge', 'seeing God as the object of true knowledge' etc., may be optional according to the mode of discipline followed by a practicant.

The opposites of these virtues, viz., lust for honour and glory, hypocrisy, violence, anger, duplicity, crookedness, malice, impurity, fickleness, covetousness, attachment, egotism, the sense of mine-ness, differentiation, impiety, association with evil men and other such evil propensities are conducive to the growth of ignorance, which is the cause of birth and death, and degrade the soul. Hence they are the same as ignorance and as such should be totally abandoned.

Hearing thus of the means to Knowledge under the appellation of Knowledge, one may ask: What is that which should be known through the Knowledge acquired by such means, and what is the result of that Knowledge? Anticipating this question, the Lord undertakes to describe the object of Knowledge and, holding out the "attainment of immortality" as its reward, devotes the next six verses to a description of God, the object of Knowledge.

ज्ञेयं यत्तत्प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वामृतमश्नुते ।

अनादिमत्परं ब्रह्म न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते ॥ १२ ॥

यत् which; ज्ञेयम् (is) worth knowing; यत् (and) which; ज्ञात्वा having known; अमृतम् supreme bliss; अश्नुते one attains; तत् that; प्रवक्ष्यामि I shall speak at length about; तत् that; अनादिमत् ruling over beginningless entities; परम् supreme; ब्रह्म Brahma (Absolute); न neither; सत् being; न nor; असत् non-being; उच्यते is declared.

I shall speak to you at length about that which ought to be known, and knowing which one attains supreme Bliss. That supreme Brahma, who is the lord of beginningless entities, is said to be neither Sat (being) nor Asat (non-being). (12)

The word 'Jñeyam' in this verse stands for Brahma or God, both absolute and qualified, who is all truth, all consciousness and all bliss; for, in this very context, the Lord speaks of this object of knowledge as both attributeless and as the enjoyer of attributes or modes of Prakṛti.

The word 'Amṛta' denotes God who is an embodiment of supreme bliss. The intention is to show that through the knowledge of the supreme Brahma or God, who is the only object worth knowing, man gets freed for all time from the bondage of mundane existence in the form of repeated births and deaths, and attains supreme Bliss. It is this supreme Bliss which is also spoken of as attainment of the supreme goal or the supreme state.

In verse 19 of this very chapter, the Lord speaks of both Prakṛti (Matter) and the individual soul as beginningless. Being the Lord of both, the supreme Brahma or the supreme Puruṣa has been referred to here as 'Anādimat' (holding sway over beginningless entities).

The use of the word 'Brahma' qualified by the adjective 'Param', is intended to show that the object of Knowledge referred to here is no other than the absolute,

formless Brahma or God, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. The word 'Brahma' can also be taken to denote the Vedas, Brahmā (the Creator) and Prakṛti; hence it has been qualified by the adjective 'Param' in order to show that the object of Knowledge spoken of in this verse is something different from all these.

That which is established by proof is called 'Sat' (being). The existence of God, who is eternal and imperishable and stands self-proved, cannot be established by any proof; for all derive their existence from God, who is beyond all proof. Śruti also says: "How can that knowing subject be known?" He is entirely different from objects which can be known through various means of cognition; hence God cannot be called 'Sat'. And that which has no existence in reality is spoken of as 'Asat' (non-being); but it is not true to say that the supreme Brahma or God has no existence. He surely exists; nay, the existence of all else is proved by His existence. Hence He cannot be called 'Asat' (non-being) either. That is why God is beyond both 'Sat' (being) and 'Asat' (non-being).

In IX. 19 the Lord said that He was 'being' and 'non-being' both; whereas in the present verse He says that God, who

is the only object worth knowing, is neither 'Sat' (being) nor 'Asat' (non-being). Although the above two statements appear as contradictory, the contradiction is more apparent than real. For when a positive assertion is made with reference to God, it is stated that all that exists is Brahma; and when an attempt is made to describe Him by the negative method, it is said that He is 'neither this nor that', but that He certainly is. In the previous statement a positive assertion is made with regard to God; hence it was but reasonable for the Lord to say, "I am being and non-being both." But, truly speaking, words cannot describe the real character of God either by the positive or by the negative method. Whatever is said about Him is only intended to serve as a hint just as we try to locate the

new moon with the help of a bough which appears adjacent to it: words are utterly incapable of representing His true character. Śruti also says:—

यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह ।

"Failing to reach Whom, speech together with the mind returneth (that is Brahma)." (Tait. Up. II. 9.) It is in order to bring this out clearly that in the present verse the Lord negatively describes God as neither 'Sat' (being) nor 'Asat' (non-being). He means to say that the true character of the object of knowledge sought to be described by Him is beyond the ken of mind or speech; therefore, whatever will be said about Him should be taken to be only a faint indication of His character and nothing more.

Undertaking thus to describe the reality of what is worth knowing (Jñeya), the Lord briefly described that truth; but the truth of that object of Knowledge is deeply profound. Hence, in order to give an idea of that truth to the practisant, the Lord further describes it in detail through such attributes as 'all-pervasiveness', etc.

सर्वतःपाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।

सर्वतःश्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥ १३ ॥

तत् It (is); सर्वतःपाणिपादम् having hands and feet on all sides; सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् having eyes, heads and faces in all directions; सर्वतःश्रुतिम् (and) having ears all round; लोके (for) in the universe; सर्वम् all; आवृत्य pervading; तिष्ठति It stands.

It has hands and feet on all sides, eyes, head and mouth in all directions, and ears all round; for It stands pervading all in the universe. (13)

The assertion that God has hands on all sides signifies that He is capable of accepting an offering wherever it is offered to Him. Similarly, the statement that He has feet everywhere implies that He accepts the prostrations made at His feet by a devotee wherever he offers them. For, omnipotent as He is, He can perform the function of all His senses and other faculties everywhere. His grasping faculty and moving faculty are all-pervasive.

The statement that "He has eyes, head and mouth in all directions", also shows the all-pervasive character of that which is worth knowing. Since He has eyes everywhere, there is no space where His eyes do not function; hence nothing is hidden from His view. Inasmuch as He has His head everywhere, flowers etc. placed on His head by the devotees as a mark of honour reach His head wherever they are offered; there is no place devoid of His head. Having His mouth every-

where, He can accept an article of food wherever His devotees offer it to Him; there is no place where His mouth does not exist. In other words, God, who is the only object worth knowing, is the Witness of all, is all-seeing, and is capable of accepting the homage and offerings of all.

The statement that "He has ears all round" likewise describes the all-pervasiveness of God. It means that He can hear everywhere. Wherever His devotees offer Him praises or prayers or make entreaties

to Him, He clearly hears them all.

The concluding assertion that "He stands pervading all in the universe" also proves in a comprehensive sense the all-pervasive character of that which is worth knowing. Just as ether, being the cause of air, fire, water and earth, stands pervading all those elements, even so God, being the cause of the entire universe consisting of the animate and inanimate creation, stands pervading them all. Therefore, everything is full of God.

Speaking of God as having His hands and feet and all other senses capable of functioning everywhere, the Lord now proceeds to establish the transcendent character of His being.

सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् ।

असक्तं सर्वभूच्चैव निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तृ च ॥ १४ ॥

सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासम् perceiving all sense-objects; सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् (it is really speaking) devoid of all senses; च and; असक्तम् (though) unattached; सर्वभूत् (is) the sustainer of all; एव nonetheless; च and (again); निर्गुणम् (though) attributeless; गुणभोक्तृ (is yet) the enjoyer of qualities or modes of Prakṛti.

Though perceiving all sense-objects It is, really speaking, devoid of all senses. Nay, though unattached, it is the sustainer of all nonetheless; and though attributeless, It is the enjoyer of qualities (the three modes of Prakṛti).

(14)

The first half of this verse shows that even the qualified aspect of God, who is the only object worth knowing, is exceptionally marvellous and transcendent in character. That is to say, the assertion made in verse 13 above that he has hands and feet and all other senses functioning everywhere, should not lead one to think that He has hands and feet and other organs analogous to those of other living beings. Though altogether devoid of such senses, He is capable of perceiving the respective objects of those senses. That is why He has been declared as having all the senses everywhere and yet devoid of all senses. Śruti also says:—

"He (God) grasps and rapidly moves without hands and feet; He sees without eyes and hears without ears." (Śwe. Up. III. 19.)*

Hence He is possessed of a transcendent character; this is what is sought to be conveyed in the present and the following two verses.

The assertion that, "though unattached, He is the sustainer of all" shows that, unlike worldly parents who maintain and support their family out of attachment for the latter, God or the supreme Brahma sustains and nourishes all without any attachment. That is why He has been

spoken of as the disinterested friend and benefactor of all beings (V. 29). In other words, God, who is all-pervading and the only object worth knowing, is entirely free from the taint of attachment. Yet He sustains and nourishes all due to His contact with Prakṛti. Herein lies His transcendence.

The concluding statement that "though really beyond all attributes, God is the

enjoyer of qualities" also establishes His transcendent character. The intention is to show that, though enjoying all qualities or modes of Prakṛti, God is never tainted by the modes of Prakṛti even as other beings are. Though in reality He is entirely beyond the modes of Prakṛti, He is yet the enjoyer of all qualities by reason of His contact with Prakṛti. This is another example of His transcendence.

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च ।

सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत् ॥ १५ ॥

भूतानाम् बहिः अन्तः (It exists) without and within all beings (both animate and inanimate); च and; चरम् (It is) animate; अचरम् (and) inanimate; एव as well; च and; तत् It; सूक्ष्मत्वात् by reason of Its subtlety; अविज्ञेयम् (is) incomprehensible; च and (finally); अन्तिके close at hand; च as well as; दूरस्थम् standing afar; तत् (is) That.

It exists without and within all beings, and constitutes the animate and inanimate creation as well. And by reason of Its subtlety, It is incomprehensible; It is close at hand and stands afar too. * (15)

Just as an iceberg floating in the sea is pervaded, both inside and outside, by water, even so all animate and inanimate beings are pervaded, both inside and outside, by God, who is the only object worth knowing.

The above statement that God exists both within and without all animate and inanimate beings should not lead anyone to imagine that the animate and inanimate creation itself is something different from Him. In order to make this clear, the Lord further says that the animate and inanimate creation too constitutes His being. That is to say, just as a block of floating ice has water both within and without, and the ice is really the same as water and nothing but water, even so

the whole animate and inanimate creation is the same as God and nothing but God.

One may ask here: If everything is God, how is it that all people do not know Him ? Anticipating this query, the Lord further says that just as the common people cannot perceive the molecules of water existing in the sun's rays,—they find it hard to perceive those molecules,—even so the all-pervading supreme Brahma or God, being far subtler even than the molecules of water, beats the comprehension of the common people and is thus incomprehensible.

There is no space within or without this entire universe, where God is not. Hence He is too near and far as well;

* Śruti also says:—

तदेजति तन्नैजति तदूरे तदन्तिके । तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य तदु सर्वस्यास्य बाह्यतः ॥

(*Iśa Up.*, 5)

"It moves and it does not move; it is far and it is near too. It is within this all as well as without the entire creation."

for God, who is Consciousness and Bliss is too near to those reverent souls who solidified, ever fills all places which man know this truth; while He is far away regards as distant and near. Hence He to the irreverent.

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।

भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ॥ १६ ॥

अविभक्तम् (in its undivided aspect) integral like space; च and yet; भूतेषु in (all) beings (both animate and inanimate); विभक्तम् divided; इव as it were; स्थितम् appears to stand; च and; तत् that; ज्ञेयम् God, who is the only object worth knowing; भूतभर्तृ (is) the sustainer and nourisher of beings (as Viṣṇu); च and; ग्रसिष्णु the destroyer (as Rudra); च and; प्रभविष्णु the creator of all (as Brahmā).

Though integral like space in Its undivided aspect, It appears divided as it were in all animate and inanimate beings. And that Godhead, which is the only object worth knowing, is the sustainer of beings (as Viṣṇu), the destroyer (as Rudra) and the creator of all (as Brahmā). (16)

The first line of this verse establishes the unity of God, who is the only object worth knowing. Just as the all-pervading space, though really one and indivisible, appears divided as it were because of its being enclosed by different pots, even so God, though really undivided, appears divided as it were in the form of the 'Kṣetrajña' (subject or ego), residing in all beings, both animate and inanimate. This diversity is only

apparent; in reality, God is one, and He fills all space.

The latter half of this verse shows that Almighty God, who is the only object worth knowing, is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the entire creation, both animate and inanimate, and performs these functions in three different forms. In other words, He alone is Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva.

ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योतिस्तमसः परमुच्यते ।

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञानगम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य विष्ठितम् ॥ १७ ॥

तत् that (supreme Brahma); ज्योतिषाम् of lights; अपि even; ज्योतिः the light; तमसः परम् (and) entirely beyond Māyā (Illusion); उच्यते is said (to be); ज्ञानम् (It is) Knowledge itself; ज्ञेयम् worth knowing; ज्ञानगम्यम् (and) worth attaining through real wisdom; सर्वस्य of all; हृदि in the heart; विष्ठितम् (is) particularly seated.

That supreme Brahma is said to be the light of all lights, and entirely beyond Māyā. That godhead is Knowledge itself, worth knowing, and worth attaining through real wisdom, and is particularly seated in the heart of all. (17)

The godhead referred to above is the illuminator of all external lights such as the sun, moon, lightning and stars, of all psychic lights viz., the intellect, mind and senses etc., and of all celestial lights in the shape of deities presiding over the different worlds and objects. Even the power of illumination inherent in all these is only a fraction of God. That is why He is the light of all lights, that is, the illuminator of all, the source of all light; He is illuminated by none. Śruti also says:—"Neither the sun nor the moon, nor stars shine in that realm; nor again does lightning flash there. How, then, can this fire shed its lustre? All these reflect His light; all this borrows its light from His." (*Kāthopaniṣad* II. ii. 15 and *Śwe. Up.*, VI. 14)* The Gītā also says in XV. 12 that "the light in the sun, which illumines the entire universe, and that which exists in the moon and in the fire, know it to be My effulgence."

The word 'Tamasah' in this verse stands for darkness and ignorance. And the godhead referred to here is self-effulgent and Knowledge itself; Darkness and ignorance cannot exist near Him. Hence He has been spoken of as entirely beyond—altogether free from—Māyā.

The word 'Jñānam' (Knowledge) denotes the essential nature of God. The use of this attribute shows that God is consciousness or Knowledge itself.

Again, the qualification 'Jñeya' used with reference to It is intended to reveal that the highest duty of man is to know God, the only object worth knowing, the discussion of which has been commenced from verse 12 above. Hence it behoves all to exert themselves fully to know Its truth, rather than fritter away their precious lives in pursuit of worldly enjoyments.

The word 'Jñeyam' indicated that it is essential to know God. Here it may be asked: How is He to be known? Anticipating this query, the Lord says that He can be known by means of true wisdom acquired through the practice of virtues like 'absence of pride' etc. referred to in the foregoing verses as conducive to Knowledge. God should be known by acquiring true wisdom through the practice of the above virtues.

Although God is equally present everywhere, it is in the heart that He is particularly manifested. To take a homely illustration, the light of the sun, though diffused everywhere in a uniform degree, is particularly reflected in a mirror etc.; while it emits fire when reflected in a sun-stone. The reflection is not so strong in other objects. Even so the human heart is the seat of God's manifestation. In the heart of an illumined soul, of course, He stands directly manifested. It is in order to bring this out clearly that God has been spoken of as particularly seated in the hearts of all.

Thus briefly describing the true nature of the Kṣetra, Knowledge and the object worth knowing, the Lord now points out the reward of knowing this subject.

इति क्षेत्रं तथा ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं चोक्तं समासतः ।

मद्भक्त एतद्विज्ञाय मद्भावायोपपद्यते ॥ १८ ॥

इति thus; क्षेत्रम् the Kṣetra (Field); तथा as well as; ज्ञानम् Knowledge; च and; ज्ञेयम् God (who is) the only object worth knowing; समासतः in a

* न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।

तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥

nutshell; उक्तम् has been discussed; मद्भक्तः My devotee; एतत् this; विज्ञाय knowing in reality; मद्भावाय उपपद्यते enters into My Being.

Thus the truth of the Kṣetra and Knowledge, as well as of the object worth knowing, God has been briefly discussed; knowing this in reality, My devotee enters into My Being. (18)

The true denotation of 'Kṣetra' along with its evolutes has been discussed in verses 5 and 6. The twenty accessories to Knowledge have been mentioned under the name of Knowledge in verses 7 to 11; while the true character of God, who is the only object worth knowing, has been discussed in verses 12 to 17 above.

The word 'Madbhaktaḥ' in this verse stands for the devotee of God engaged in the practices of devotion such as His adoration, meditation on His being, carrying out His commandments, worship and devotional service etc. The use of this word is intended to show that even the practicante who treads the path of Knowledge can easily

reach the supreme state by surrendering himself to God.

Realization of the fact that the 'Kṣetra' is an evolute of Prakṛti, unconscious, mutable, transient and perishable, resolute adoption of the virtues and practices conducive to Knowledge, and arriving through such means at a correct notion of both the Absolute and Qualified aspects of God—this is what is meant by knowing the 'Kṣetra', Knowledge and that which ought to be known. And realizing God, who is the only object worth knowing, is what is referred to here as entering into His Being.

In verse 3 above, the Lord invited Arjuna to hear in a nutshell four things with reference to the 'Kṣetra' and two things with regard to the 'Kṣetrajña' or the conscious subject. Then, after discussing at the very outset the true nature of the 'Kṣetra' and its evolutes, He incidentally enumerated the virtues and practices leading to a correct knowledge of the truth relating to the 'Kṣetra' and the 'Kṣetrajña', and further discussed the true nature of God, who is the only object worth knowing. But He failed to point out the character of the 'Kṣetra' or to mention which particular effect follows from which cause; nor did He discuss the true nature of the Kṣetrajña and its glory. Therefore, in order to take up the thread of the discussion the Lord reverts to the topic under the name of 'Prakṛti' and 'Puruṣa' (Matter and Spirit). Declaring in this connection, first of all, the datelessness of Prakṛti and Puruṣa, He proclaims all modifications and qualities to be Nature-born.

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव विद्वद्यनादी उभावपि ।

विकारांश्च गुणांश्चैव विद्धि प्रकृतिसंभवान् ॥ १९ ॥

प्रकृतिम् Prakṛti (Matter); च and; पुरुषम् Puruṣa (Spirit); उभौ both; एव indeed; अनादी beginningless; विद्धि know; च and; विकारान् modifications (such as likes and dislikes); च and; गुणान् all objects of the nature of the three Guṇas; अपि too; प्रकृतिसंभवान् born of Prakṛti; एव indeed; विद्धि know.

Prakṛti and Puruṣa, know both these as beginningless. And know all modifications such as likes and dislikes etc. and all objects constituted of the three Guṇas as born of Prakṛti. (19)

The word 'Prakṛti' in this verse stands for God's own primordial Nature, that has existed from time without beginning. It is no other than what has been spoken of as 'Mahad-Brahma' in Chapter XIV. Again, it is this very Prakṛti that has been referred to in VII. 4-5 under the name of 'Aparā Prakṛti' or lower Nature, and as 'Kṣetra' in verse 5 above. The only difference is that whereas the above verses speak of this Primordial Prakṛti with her evolutes, viz., mind, intellect, ego and the five gross elements etc., the present verse treats of primordial Nature alone.

The use of the particles 'Cha' and 'Eva' is intended to convey that Prakṛti and Puruṣa stand on the same footing so far as 'beginninglessness' is concerned, or that the two are identical in this respect. And the object of declaring both as 'without beginning' is to show that the Jivahood of the Jīva, i. e., his association with Prakṛti is not something adventitious, but has existed from time without beginning, and even so this Prakṛti, which is God's own energy or potency, should be recognized as beginningless.

The word 'Vikārān' stands for modifications such as desire and aversion, joy and sorrow etc., enumerated in verse 6 of this very chapter; while 'Guṇān' stands for the three Guṇas, or modes of Prakṛti, viz., Sattva, Rajas, Tamas, and all material objects evolved therefrom. The intention of the Lord in declaring both these to be Nature-born is to show that Prakṛti is not synonymous with the three Guṇas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas; it is something without beginning. In the beginning of creation, the three Guṇas are born of Prakṛti (Śrīmad Bhāgavata II. v. 22 and XI. xxiv. 5.). It is in order to make this point clear that in XIV. 5 the Lord mentions the three Guṇas by name and declares them as Nature-born. Again, in verse 5 of Chapter III, verse 40 of Chapter XVIII, and verse 21 of the present chapter the Lord speaks of the three Guṇas as Nature-born. Verses 27 and 28 of Chapter III as well refer to the three Guṇas as evolutes of Prakṛti. Therefore, the three Guṇas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—with their evolutes, and likewise all modifications should be recognized as born of Prakṛti or Nature.

In verse 3 above Arjuna was invited to hear whence is what; this has been partly discussed in the latter half of the preceding verse. Now, concluding the discussion in the first half of the next verse, the Lord discusses in the second half as well as in verse 21 the nature of the Puruṣa (Spirit) as seated in Prakṛti.

कार्यकरणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिरुच्यते ।

पुरुषः सुखदुःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते ॥ २० ॥

कार्यकरणकर्तृत्वे in bringing forth the evolutes as well as the organs; हेतुः the cause; प्रकृतिः Prakṛti or Nature; उच्यते is said (to be); पुरुषः the individual soul; सुखदुःखानाम् of joys and sorrows; भोक्तृत्वे in the experience; हेतुः the cause; उच्यते is declared (to be).

Prakṛti is said to be responsible for bringing forth the evolutes and

the instruments; while the individual soul is declared to be the cause of experience of joys and sorrows. (20)

The five subtle elements, ether, air, fire, water and earth, and the five objects of senses, viz., sound, touch, colour, taste and smell—these ten constitute what has been referred to as 'Kārya' in this verse. And the three internal or psychic organs, viz., the intellect, the ego and the mind, the five senses of perception, viz., the sense of hearing, the tactile sense, the senses of sight and taste and the olfactory sense, and the five organs of action, viz., the tongue, hands and feet, and the organs of generation and defecation—these thirteen are covered by the term 'Kāraṇa'. It is from Prakṛti that these twenty-three categories are evolved; Prakṛti alone is their material cause; hence Prakṛti has been declared to be the cause of their evolution.

The order of their evolution is as follows. Prakṛti gives rise to the Mahat-Tattva (the principle of Cosmic Intelligence), from the Mahat-Tattva follows Ahankāra (the Cosmic Ego), Ahankāra brings forth the five Tanmātras, mind and the ten organs of perception and action; and the five Tanmātras in their turn are believed to evolve the five gross elements. This is borne out by the following verse (verse 22) of the *Sāṅkhya-Kārikā* :—

प्रकृतेर्महांस्ततोऽङ्कारस्तस्माद् गणश्च षोडशकः ।
तस्मादपि षोडशकात् पञ्चम्यः पञ्चभूतानि ॥

The Gītā speaks of the five subtle elements in place of the five Tanmātras, while in place of the five gross elements it mentions the five objects of the senses. This is the only difference between the two versions.

In some editions of the Gītā, we find the word 'Kāraṇa' substituted for 'Kārya' in the present verse. If we accept this variant, the word 'Kārya'

should be understood to stand for the following sixteen categories, viz., the five senses of perception, the five organs of action, mind and the five objects of senses; for they are all effects of some cause, and are not themselves the cause of others. And the word 'Kāraṇa' should be taken to cover the intellect, the ego and the five subtle elements. For the intellect is the cause of the ego; the ego is the cause of the mind, senses and the five subtle elements; and the five subtle elements in their turn are the causes of the five objects of senses.

Although other scriptures recognize four aspects of the Antaḥkarāṇa or inner sense, viz., Buddhi (Intellect), Ahankāra (Ego), Chitta (the faculty of cogitation or reflection) and Manas (Mind), the Lord does not recognize Chitta and Manas as two diverse faculties; He reckons them as only two names of one and the same faculty. The Sāṅkhya and Yoga systems also uphold the same view. That is why, instead of four, the Lord speaks here of only three aspects of the Mind or Antaḥkarāṇa.

Here it may be urged that the word 'Puruṣa' stands for the conscious Self or Ātmā, and the Self is regarded as stainless and pure; how, then, has the Puruṣa been declared as responsible for the experience of joys and sorrows? Our submission in this connection is that Prakṛti, being unconscious, cannot possibly have any experience of pleasure or pain; while the Puruṣa or Spirit is unattached, hence that too is not the experiencer really speaking. It is only through its contact with Prakṛti that the Puruṣa appears to be the experiencer; and this contact between Puruṣa and Prakṛti has no beginning, hence the Puruṣa has been recognized as responsible for the experience of joys and sorrows. It is in order to make this point clear that the

next verse explicitly says that it is the evolved from Prakṛti. That is why the Puruṣa seated in Prakṛti who senses Puruṣa, weaned from Prakṛti, has no objects of the nature of the three Guṇas semblance of such experiences.

पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्यो हि भुङ्क्ते प्रकृतिजान् गुणान् ।

कारणं गुणसङ्गोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु ॥ २१ ॥

प्रकृतिस्यः पुरुषः the Puruṣa seated in Prakṛti; हि only; प्रकृतिजान् गुणान् objects of the nature of the three Guṇas evolved from Prakṛti; भुङ्क्ते senses; गुणसङ्गः contact with these Guṇas (alone); अस्य of this (embodied soul); सदसद्योनिजन्मसु कारणम् (is) responsible for birth in good and evil wombs.

Only the Puruṣa seated in Prakṛti senses objects of the nature of the three Guṇas evolved from Prakṛti. And it is contact with these Guṇas that is responsible for the birth of this soul in good and evil wombs. (21)

The substantive 'Guṇān', qualified by 'Prakṛtijān', denotes the three qualities or moods, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, born of Prakṛti, as well as their evolutes, viz., all mundane objects of the nature of sound, touch, colour, taste and smell. An individual soul is said to be seated in Prakṛti so long as it is invested with any of the three bodies—gross, subtle and causal—born of Prakṛti. That is why the Self or Spirit senses the Nature-born qualities so long as it is associated with Prakṛti. It ceases to be the enjoyer on its being dissociated with Prakṛti; for, in reality, the Puruṣa is eternally detached in character.

The human and all other higher species, such as the celestial species and so on, are 'good' wombs; while all sub-human species, e. g., beasts, birds, trees and creepers etc., fall under the category of 'evil' wombs. Contact of the Jīva or embodied soul with the three Guṇas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, existing from time without beginning, and his attachment for worldly objects which are the evolutes of those Guṇas is what is referred to as 'Guṇasangaḥ'. The latent desires of a man are determined by his attachment for a particular Guṇa or its evolutes; and it is these latent desires

which decide the nature of his rebirth. That is why contact with the Guṇas has been declared as responsible for one's birth in good or evil wombs.

In this connection it may be noted that in IV. 13 the Lord claimed to have brought into being the four orders of society, dividing people according to their qualities and actions. In VIII. 6, He declared that whatever a man thinks of at the last moment before leaving his body, that very object he attains in his next life. And in the present verse He attributes one's birth in good or evil wombs to contact with the Guṇas. How are these three versions to be reconciled?

Our submission in this connection is that there is no incongruity whatsoever between these three statements. On closer examination all the three statements will be found in one way or other to attribute one's birth in good and evil wombs to contact with the Guṇas. (1) God evolves the four orders of society on the basis of the Guṇas and Karmas of each individual. In this division contact of the Jīvas with the Guṇas naturally operates as the determining factor. (2) Man develops special attachment for one of the three Guṇas according to the nature of his

pursuits and the kind of company he keeps; and the inclinations or tendencies formed as a result of those actions are also of a cognate type. Again, his thought at the last moment of his life is determined by those proclivities and his birth in good or evil wombs is in its turn decided by his thought at the last moment. Hence contact with the Guṇas is the ultimate cause even of one's birth in good or evil wombs. (3) In the present verse, of course, contact with the Guṇas has been expressly stated to be the cause of such birth. Therefore, all the three statements bring out the same truth.

Having thus described the character of the Puruṣa seated in Prakṛti, the Lord now delineates the transcendent character of the Self, establishing identity between God and the individual soul at the same time.

उपद्रष्टानुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वरः ।

परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽस्मिन् पुरुषः परः ॥ २२ ॥

अस्मिन् देहे (dwelling) in this body; पुरुषः the Spirit; परः (is really the same as) the Supreme; उपद्रष्टा the seer or witness; च and; अनुमन्ता the (true) guide; भर्ता the sustainer; भोक्ता the experiencer (as the embodied soul); महेश्वरः the Overlord; च and; अपि also; परमात्मा the Absolute; इति as; उक्तः has been spoken of.

The Spirit, dwelling in this body, is really the same as the Supreme. He has been spoken of as the Witness, the true Guide, the Sustainer of all, the Experiencer (as the embodied soul), the Overlord and the Absolute as well. (22)

The assertion that the Spirit dwelling in this body is really the same as the Supreme indicates the transcendent character of the knowing Self. The intention is to say that the conscious Self, which on account of its being conditioned by bodies evolved from Prakṛti erroneously appears to have assumed an individual character, is, in reality, the same as the Supreme, who is entirely beyond this Prakṛti; for virtually there is no difference whatsoever between the supreme Eternal and the knowing subject. The diversity which appears to exist between the two is only due to the latter being limited by a body.

The same supreme Eternal is called by different names due to different causes. In reality and substance, however, there

is no diversity in Brahma. Thus, for instance, as the inner controller of all He alone observes the good and evil deeds of men: hence He is called 'Upadraṣṭā' (Witness). The very same God, residing in the heart of all, gives proper advice to those who seek it; hence He is called 'Anumantā' or Guide. In the form of Viṣṇu He alone protects and sustains the whole universe; therefore, He is called the 'Bhartā' or Sustainer. Again, it is He who, in the form of celestials, partakes of the oblations offered in all sacrifices, and in the form of various beings undergoes all sorts of experiences; hence He is called the 'Bhoktā' or Enjoyer. He alone is the supreme Lord ruling over gods or guardians of the world and even divine lords like Brahmā, the Creator; hence He is called by the

name of 'Maheśwara' or the Overlord; the Paramātmā or Absolute. This is what and in reality, He ever remains entirely is sought to be conveyed by the present beyond the Guṇas; therefore, He is called verse.

Describing thus the character of Prakṛti together with the Guṇas, as also of the Puruṣa, the Lord now declares the reward of knowing them in reality.

य एवं वेत्ति पुरुषं प्रकृतिं च गुणैः सह ।

सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि न स भूयोऽभिजायते ॥ २३ ॥

एवम् thus; पुरुषम् the Puruṣa or Spirit; च and; गुणैः सह together with the Guṇas; प्रकृतिम् Prakṛti or Nature; यः who; वेत्ति knows (in reality); सः he; सर्वथा in every way; वर्तमानः acting; अपि even; भूयः again; न not; अभिजायते is born.

He who thus knows the Puruṣa (Spirit) and Prakṛti (Nature) together with the Guṇas,—even though performing his duties in every way, is never born again. (23)

Knowledge of the Puruṣa consists in realizing the character and glory of the Puruṣa as delineated in this chapter. In other words, true realization of the fact that all knowing selves that appear to have a separate existence are identical with the supreme Eternal, that the diversity appearing in them is due to their contact with Prakṛti, really speaking there is no difference between them, and that God is eternal, pure, awakened, free, imperishable and wholly beyond Prakṛti, and to establish oneself in identity with that embodiment of Truth, Consciousness and Bliss once for all, is what is meant by 'knowing the Puruṣa in reality'. And grasping the truth that the three Guṇas are evolutes of Prakṛti, that the whole universe is nothing but a projection of Prakṛti, and that it is perishable, unconscious, momentary and transient, is what is meant by 'knowing Prakṛti together with the Guṇas in reality'.

The use of the indeclinable 'Api' with the words 'Sarvathā Vartamānaḥ' is intended to show that he who knows the Puruṣa and Prakṛti with the three

Guṇas, as stated above, be he a Brahman, a Kṣatriya, a Vaiśya or a Śūdra, and to whatever Āśrama or stage in life (such as Brahmacharya etc.) he belongs, even though duly performing all the duties enjoined by the Śāstras for that particular caste and Āśrama, really does nothing and hence is never born again.

Since evils like lust and anger wholly cease to exist in an enlightened soul who has realized the Self (V. 26), it is never possible for him to indulge in prohibited acts. That is why his conduct is recognized as standard (III. 21). Hence the words 'Sarvathā Vartamānaḥ', followed by the indeclinable 'Api', cannot be interpreted to mean that such an enlightened soul is never born again even if he indulges in prohibited acts; for it is evil impulses like lust and anger that lead to sin. In reply to Arjuna's query, the Lord has expressly stated this in III. 37.

The Puruṣa ceases to have anything to do with Prakṛti the moment he comes to know the truth about both; for their contact has been held to be imaginary, unreal

and brought about by mere ignorance. then that he continues to be born again. The contact of the Puruṣa with Prakṛti and again in various species (XIII. 21). and its Guṇas lasts only so long as they That is why one is not reborn after are not fully known and it is only till knowing their true nature.

On hearing the glory of the Knowledge of Prakṛti with the three Guṇas and of the Puruṣa, one may be tempted to enquire how this knowledge may be gained. Therefore, in the next two verses, the Lord mentions various disciplines to be followed by men of different aptitudes for the realization of Truth.

ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति केचिदात्मानमात्मना ।

अन्ये सांख्येन योगेन कर्मयोगेन चापरे ॥ २४ ॥

आत्मानम् the supreme Spirit or Self; केचित् some (men); आत्मना through (their refined and sharp) intellect; ध्यानेन by meditation; आत्मनि in the heart; पश्यन्ति behold; अन्ये (certain) others; सांख्येन योगेन through the discipline of Knowledge; च and; अपरे (still) others; कर्मयोगेन (behold It) through the discipline of Action.

Some by meditation behold the supreme Spirit in the heart with the help of their refined and sharp intellect; others realize It through the discipline of Knowledge, and others, again, through the discipline of Action. (24)

'Dhyāna' denotes constant meditation on God, practised in a clean and secluded spot in accordance with the procedure laid down in verses 11 to 13 of Chapter VI, i. e., firmly squatting on an appropriate seat, withdrawing the senses from their objects, controlling the mind and forgetting everything else than God. The intellect gets purified through such practice of meditation; and realizing the supreme Eternal, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, through such refined and sharp intellect within the heart is what is meant by beholding the Self by meditation in the self and through the self.

Verse 22 above has established identity between the soul and the Oversoul, and it is in the light of this identity that the Lord discusses the different forms of discipline for the attainment of the ultimate goal in the form of Realization of the Self. Therefore, judging from the

context, the meditation referred to in this verse is meditation on the absolute, formless Brahma viewed as identical with one's own self, and it is realization of God as identical with one's self that has been declared to be the reward of such meditation. But even those practicants who meditate on the qualified Divinity with or without form as apart from themselves can realize the absolute, formless Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, as identical with one's self, if they seek such reward.

The words 'Sāṅkhyena' and 'Yogena', taken together, stand for Sāṅkhyayoga or the discipline of Knowledge. This has been discussed at length in verses 11 to 30 of Chapter II, as also in verses 8, 9 and 13 of Chapter V, in verse 19 of Chapter XIV and elsewhere according to context. Realizing that all material objects are nothing but illusion, like water in a mirage,

or that which appears in a dream, so that it is only the Guṇas, which are born of Prakṛti, that react on the Guṇas, a follower of the path of Knowledge gives up the sense of doership in respect of all activities of the mind, senses and the body, and ever established in identity with the all-pervading God, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, refuses to recognize the separate existence of anything other than God. And directly perceiving, through such practice, the identity of the soul with the Oversoul and thus realizing the Absolute, is what is meant by beholding the self in the self through the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga.

Sāṅkhyayoga can be easily practised only by a qualified soul who is endowed with the four equipments, viz., (1) Viveka or Discrimination, (2) Vairāgya or Dispassion, (3) Śaṭ Sampatti or the sixfold riches, and (4) Mumukṣutva, the quest for freedom.

1. VIVEKA

Discrimination between the real and the unreal, as well as between the eternal and the fleeting is called Viveka. Discrimination sifts the one from the other. Viveka is the same as realization of Truth. This consummation of Viveka is attained by constantly sifting the self from the non-self, under all circumstances, and in every object. When Viveka actually dawns, difference between the real and the unreal, between the eternal and the transient, begins to be directly experienced as that between milk and water. The next equipage is:—

(2) VAIRĀGYA

Once the real is sifted from the unreal, and the eternal from the passing, with the help of discrimination, attraction for the unreal and the passing naturally ceases. This is what they call Vairāgya. If the hankering for enjoyments persists in the mind and we make a show of aversion to and disgust for the world, that is no dispassion. There is total negation of Rāga,

or attachment in dispassion; Vairāgya, really speaking, is another name for mental detachment. The mind of those who develop true dispassion entirely ceases to have any thirst or attachment for the various forms of enjoyment extending up to the abode of Brahmā (the Creator). Turning their back upon the unreal and the transient they remain constantly intent on the real and the eternal. This is what constitutes dispassion. So long as this type of dispassion does not appear Viveka should be regarded as deficient. When discrimination is complete, the awakening of dispassion is inevitable.

(3) THE SIXFOLD RICHES

As a result of such discrimination and dispassion, the practicant comes to acquire sixfold riches of the highest value. So long as this wealth is not fully acquired, discrimination and dispassion should be regarded as positively deficient; for when the practicant is fully endowed with discrimination and dispassion, it is easy for him to acquire this wealth. This wealth is known by the name of 'Śaṭ-sampatti' (the sixfold riches) and the following are the six factors constituting it:—

1. *Śama*. Complete subjugation, quiescence and stillness of the mind is called Śama. When discrimination and dispassion are fully developed, the mind naturally becomes quiescent and still.

2. *Dama*. Complete mastery over the senses and their finding no relish in the objects of enjoyment is called Dama.

3. *Uparati*. Withdrawal of the mind from all worldly objects is known as 'Uparati'. When the mind and the senses cease to have any relish for the objects of enjoyment, the practicant will naturally turn his back on them. This indifference must be cultivated with respect to every form of enjoyment,—not simply externally but internally. The mind should never think of even the rare pleasures of Brahmāloka or the seventh heaven with

intent to enjoy them. This is what is known as Uparati.

4. *Titikṣā*. *Titikṣā* ordinarily means maintaining one's balance of mind in the face of *Dwandvas* or pairs of opposites, such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain, honour and ignominy; but the '*Titikṣā*' which follows in the wake of *Viveka*, *Vairāgya*, *Śama*, *Dama* and *Uparati* must be something different from ordinary endurance as indicated above. The *Dwandvas* can neither cease in this world nor can any one wholly avoid them. Putting up with them anyhow is also quite good, but the best thing is to rise above the realm of contraries and to look on them as a dispassionate observer. Such indeed is *Titikṣā* in the real sense of the term. When this state is reached, heat and cold or honour and ignominy can no longer touch a man.

5. *Śraddhā*. Unceasing faith in the existence of the Self as in something directly perceived is called *Śraddhā*. *Śraddhā*, first of all, centres round the *Śāstras* or sacred books, the personality of the religious preceptor and spiritual practice etc.; faith in the Self develops thereby. But so long as complete faith is not developed in the spiritual self, the intellect cannot get established in the one integral, stainless, formless and attributeless *Brahma* as its goal.

6. *Samādhāna*. *Samādhāna* means total absorption of the mind and intellect in God. In other words, just as *Arjuna*, while demonstrating his skill in archery in the presence of *Āchārya Drona*, beheld only the neck of the dummy bird placed on a tree, even so when one's mind and intellect constantly perceive God alone as their sole objective, that is *Samādhāna*.

4. MUMUKṢUTVA

In this way when discrimination, dispassion and the sixfold virtues are acquired, the practicant naturally seeks absolute freedom from the bondage of ignorance, and withdrawing his mind from everything else, and without looking in any other direction, runs exclusively after God. This running after God with the utmost speed on his part, i. e., his intense practice itself is an indication of his keenest desire to realize God. This is what they call '*Mumukṣutva*' or the quest for liberation.

* * * *

The word '*Karmayoga*' in this verse stands for the course of discipline which has been discussed, along with its reward, in Chapter II from verse 40 up to the end of the chapter. In other words, *Karmayoga* consists in performing all one's prescribed duties, appropriate to the *Varna* (grade in society) and *Āśrama* (stage in life) to which one belongs, according to the scriptural injunctions in a disinterested spirit, renouncing all attachment and reward, and treating success and failure alike. And realizing the supreme eternal Spirit, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, as one's own self through this discipline is what is meant by beholding the Self in the self through *Karmayoga*.

Here it must be remembered that, even though maintaining his identity apart from God during the period of his *Sādhana*, the practicant who aims at unity in the end realizes *Brahma* as his own self. And the subject under discussion in this verse is to ascertain the practices through which God can be realized as one's own self. That is why this verse speaks of realizing the supreme eternal Spirit as one's own self even through the practice of *Karmayoga*.

अन्ये त्वेवमजानन्तः श्रुत्वान्येभ्य उपासते ।

तेऽपि चातितरन्त्येव मृत्युं श्रुतिपरायणाः ॥ २५ ॥

तु however; अन्ये others (viz., the dull-witted); एवम् thus; अज्ञानन्तः not knowing; अन्येभ्यः from others (those who have realized the Truth); श्रुत्वा hearing; उपासते worship (accordingly); च and; ते those; श्रुतिपरायणाः (persons) given to hearing; अपि too; मृत्युम् (the ocean of mundane existence in the shape of) death; अतितरन्ति (are able to) cross; एव indeed.

Other dull-witted persons, however, not knowing thus, worship even as they have heard from others; and even those who are thus devoted to hearing, are able to cross the ocean of mundane existence in the shape of death. (25)

The particle 'Tu' in this verse indicates that the Lord now proceeds to speak of other practicants different from those mentioned in the preceding verse. In other words, the present verse points out the way to the redemption of those who cannot fully grasp the spirit of the practices mentioned above.

The pronoun 'Anye', qualified by the adjectival phrase 'Evam Ajānantah', refers to those practicants who are too dull-witted to grasp in full the spirit of any one of the practices mentioned in the preceding verse, viz., Dhyānayoga, Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga.

Satyakāma, son of Jabālā, approached the great sage Hāridrumata, who claimed his descent from Gotama, in quest of the knowledge of Brahma. Having had a talk with him, the teacher selected from his herd four hundred weak and extremely emaciated cows and asked Satyakāma to follow them. Driving them towards the forest, as enjoined by his preceptor, with great reverence, enthusiasm and joy, Satyakāma said, "I shall return when their number swells to a thousand." Taking them to a safe retreat abounding in herbage and water, he came back only when their number had swollen to a thousand. The result was that he attained God-Realization while he was yet on his way back to his preceptor's hermitage

(*Chhāndogya*, IV. iv. 9). Receiving instructions from such men of wisdom, who have realized the Truth, and carrying them out with extreme reverence and love is what is meant by 'worshipping even as they have heard from others'.

The compound adjective 'Śruti-parāyanāḥ' refers to those who take with reverence and love to the diligent practice of what they have heard. The use of the indeclinable 'Api' is intended to show that when even such men of small understanding are doubtless able to conquer death by worshipping as they have heard from others, there can be no doubt about the redemption of practicants who follow one of the three disciplines stated above.

The word 'Mṛtyum' in this verse stands for mundane existence in the shape of repeated births and deaths. The use of the verb 'Taranti', with 'Ati' prefixed to it, is intended to show that those who worship as indicated above attain lasting union with the supreme eternal Spirit, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, and are never born again. In short, the words 'Mṛtyum Atitaranti' in this verse convey the same idea as has been brought out by the words 'he is not born again' in verse 23 and 'beholding the Self in the self' in verse 24 above.

Mentioning thus the various means to God-Realization, the Lord now describes in the next two verses the character of the Kṣetra, as promised in verse 3 above.

by declaring it as subject to birth and death, and glorifies the knower of the real truth about the Self.

यावत्संजायते किञ्चित्सत्त्वं स्थावरजङ्गमम् ।

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगात्तद्विद्धि भरतर्षभ ॥ २६ ॥

भरतर्षभ O best among the Bharatas, Arjuna; यावत् किञ्चित् whatsoever; स्थावरजङ्गमम् immobile or mobile, *i.e.*, inanimate or animate; सत्त्वं being; संजायते is born; तत् that (all); क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगात् (as emanated) from the union of the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña (Matter and Spirit); विद्धि know.

Arjuna, whatever being, animate or inanimate, is born, know it as emanated from the union of Kṣetra (Matter) and the Kṣetrajña (Spirit). (26)

The adjectives 'Yāvat' and 'Kiñchit' signify totality. Beings possessing locomotion, e. g., the celestials, human beings, beasts and birds etc., fall under the category of 'Jangama' (animate); while creatures devoid of locomotion, such as trees, creepers, rocks etc., are known as 'Sthāvara' (inanimate). Therefore, the substantive 'Sattvam', qualified by the three adjectives 'Yāvat', 'Kiñchit' and 'Sthāvarajangamam' covers the entire creation of animate and inanimate beings.

The term 'Kṣetra' denotes the aggregate of twenty-four categories enumerated in

verse 5 of this chapter and which have been referred to under the name of 'Aparā Prakṛti' or the lower Nature in VII. 4 and 5. And the conscious principle which is the knower of this Kṣetra, and which has been spoken of as 'Parā Prakṛti' (the higher Nature) in verse VII. 5, is called 'Kṣetrajña'. Contact of this 'Kṣetrajña', *i.e.*, of the Puruṣa seated in Prakṛti, with the gross bodies evolved from Nature has been referred to in this verse as the union of Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña; and the emanation of beings in different shapes and forms through various types of wombs or species is what has been spoken of in this verse as their birth from such union.

समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम् ।

विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ २७ ॥

यः who; विनश्यत्सु सर्वेषु भूतेषु in all evanescent beings (both animate and inanimate); परमेश्वरम् the supreme Lord; अविनश्यन्तम् imperishable; समम् तिष्ठन्तम् (and) equally abiding; पश्यति sees; सः he (alone); पश्यति (really) sees.

He alone truly sees, who sees the supreme Lord as imperishable and abiding equally in all perishable beings, both animate and inanimate. (27)

The substantive 'Bhūteṣu', qualified by the two adjectives 'Vinaśyatsu' and 'Sarveṣu', denotes all creatures undergoing repeated births and deaths, whose contact with, and dissociation from, the

different subtle and gross bodies is held to be the cause of their birth and death. The use of the word 'Sarveṣu' is intended to cover the totality of beings; while the adjective 'Vinaśyatsu'

has been used in order to show that they are all liable to perish by virtue of their identity with the body.

It should be remembered in this connection that it is the body which is liable to perish, and not the soul. The Self or Spirit is eternal and imperishable; and it is really the same in all living beings, who appear as different through difference of bodies. This is what is sought to be conveyed in the present verse.

The word 'Parameswaram' in this verse stands for that immutable Spirit, existing entirely beyond Prakṛti, which has been declared in verse 22 above as the Witness, the Guide, the Sustainer, the Experiencer, the Overlord and the supreme Spirit, and shown to be one with the 'Kṣetrajña' or the knowing Self. This supreme Puruṣa, though essentially an embodiment of absolute Truth, Consciousness and Bliss, and existing entirely beyond Prakṛti, is

spoken of as the 'Kṣetrajña' and the experiencer of the Guṇas evolved from Prakṛti due to Its contact with Prakṛti. Seeing the one imperishable, immutable Spirit, the real self of all living beings, as eternally and equally abiding in their bodies, identity with which has earned for those beings the title of 'perishable', is what is meant by 'seeing the supreme Lord as imperishable and equally abiding in all living beings'.

The present verse speaks of the Self as one and immutable, i. e., free from all modifications such as birth and death etc. Therefore, he alone really sees, who sees this one eternal conscious Self as immutable, imperishable, equally abiding everywhere and unattached as shown above. The vision of those who view it as subject to birth and death, and as happy or otherwise, due to its identity with the body, is faulty; that is why, even though seeing, they do not see at all.

In the preceding verse it has been stated that he alone really sees, who sees that supreme Lord as imperishable and equally abiding in all beings; justifying the above statement, the Lord now declares attainment of the supreme state as the reward of such vision.

समं पश्यन् हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम् ।

न हिनस्त्यात्मनाऽऽत्मानं ततो याति परं गतिम् ॥ २८ ॥

हि because; सर्वत्र in all; समवस्थितम् equally seated; ईश्वरम् the (supreme) Lord; समम् (as) one; पश्यन् seeing; आत्मना by himself; आत्मानम् himself; न not; हिनस्ति (who) kills; ततः thereby; परम् गतिम् the supreme state; याति (he) attains.

For, he who kills not himself by himself by seeing the supreme Lord, equally present in all, as one, thereby reaches the supreme state. (28)

The indeclinable 'Hi' in this verse, implies cause. The use of this particle is intended to show that since he who is endowed with an equal vision does not kill himself and reaches the supreme state,

therefore, his vision alone is correct.

The one supreme Spirit, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, is equally present everywhere. It is due to

ignorance that He appears different in different bodies; really, there is no difference in Him. Clearly apprehending and realizing the above truth is what is meant by 'seeing the supreme Lord, equally present everywhere, as one.' Those who have no knowledge of this truth lack equal vision; for, they distinguish one individual from another. They regard some as their beloved and well-wishers while they look upon others as disagreeable and unfriendly and cognize themselves as different from others, and finite in character. Therefore, inasmuch as they recognize the birth and death of physical bodies as their own birth and death, they undergo repeated births in different species and continue to die again and again. This is what is meant by their killing themselves by their self. He, however, who sees the

one Supreme Lord as equally present in all neither views himself as other than God, nor feels that he has any connection with those physical bodies. Hence he does not see his own end in the death of the physical body; and that is why he does not kill himself by his own self. In short, he gets established in identity with the supreme eternal Spirit, who is all-knowing and imperishable and an embodiment of Truth, Consciousness and Bliss; that is why he secures lasting immunity from birth and death.

The 'Parā Gati' referred to in this verse is the same as has been spoken of elsewhere as the supreme state, attaining which one has no longer to return and which is the goal of all spiritual practices.

Describing thus the glory and reward of seeing the eternal Spirit, who is Consciousness and Bliss solidified, as equally present everywhere, the Lord now glorifies, in the next verse, the man who sees that Spirit as a non-doer.

प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः ।

यः पश्यति तथाऽऽत्मानमकर्तारं स पश्यति ॥ २९ ॥

च and; यः who; कर्माणि (all) actions; सर्वशः in all respects; प्रकृत्या एव by Prakṛti alone; क्रियमाणानि being done; तथा and; आत्मानम् the Self; अकर्तारम् a non-doer; पश्यति sees; सः he (alone); पश्यति (really) sees.

And he alone really sees, who sees all actions being performed in every way by Prakṛti alone, and the Self as the non-doer. (29)

Verses 27 and 28 of Chapter III and verse 19 of Chapter XIV speak of all actions being performed by the Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti, and verses 6 and 9 of Chapter V speak of the senses acting on sense-objects; whereas the present verse indirectly exhorts us to see all actions being done by Prakṛti. These three statements, though apparently differing from one another, point to the same conclusion, as we shall see below.

The three Guṇas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—are all evolutes of Prakṛti; and

the senses, mind and intellect etc., as well as the objects of senses—all these are extensions of the Guṇas alone. Therefore, speaking of the senses as acting on sense-objects, of the Guṇas as acting on the Guṇas, and of all actions being performed by the Guṇas is the same as declaring all actions being done by Prakṛti. Thus the same thing has been stated in all the three places, there is hardly any difference in the three statements. They are all intended to show the non-doership of the Self.

The Self is eternal, pure, awakened, free and devoid of all modifications; it has no connection whatsoever with Prakṛti. That is why it is neither the doer of any action nor the experiencer of the fruit of actions. The direct perception of this truth is what is meant by seeing the Self as the non-doer. And

the assertion that such realization is the only true realization is intended to glorify this vision. The intention is to show that the vision of those who view the Self as the doer of all actions and the experiencer of their fruit, due to its contact with the mind, intellect and body, is mistaken and therefore incorrect.

Thus glorifying the realisation of the Self as the non-doer, the Lord now points out the reward of perceiving Its unity.

यदा भूतपृथग्भावमेकस्थमनुपश्यति ।

तत एव च विस्तारं ब्रह्म सम्पद्यते तदा ॥ ३० ॥

यदा when; भूतपृथग्भावम् the diversified existence of beings; एकस्थम् (as) rooted in the one (supreme Spirit); च and; ततः एव from that alone; विस्तारम् the spreading forth (of all beings); अनुपश्यति (man) perceives; तदा that very moment; ब्रह्म the Supreme (who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified); सम्पद्यते (he) attains.

The moment man perceives the diversified existence of beings as rooted in the one supreme Spirit, and the spreading forth of all beings from the same, that very moment he attains Brahma (who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified). (30)

The compound word 'Bhūtaprthagbhāvam' in this verse stands for the manifold variety of animate and inanimate beings who are said to emanate from the union of 'Kṣetra' and the 'Kṣetrajña' (XIII. 26), and in whom the practisant has been indirectly advised to see God as equally present (*ibid.*, 27). And just as a man who has just woken from a dream perceives the motley show of beings seen in his dreaming state in his own self and also recognizes that they were all projections of his being, that, in fact, there was nothing in that dream-world other than himself, that he alone saw himself in divergent forms, even so the man of right vision sees all

creatures as existing in God, and everything as emanating from Him.

The indeclinables 'Yadā' and 'Tadā' signify immediate sequence of time. The use of these two words is intended to show that the realization of Brahma or attainment of oneness with God follows immediately after the perception of the above truth, that the process involves no amount of delay. It is this attainment of oneness with Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, that is otherwise known as attainment of the supreme state, attainment of liberation, and realization of supreme peace and lasting Bliss.

On being told that the Self is equally present in all beings, changeless and inactive, one wonders how, even though dwelling in all bodies, the Self can remain untouched by their evils, and a non-doer. In order to remove this doubt,

the Lord now describes in the following three verses the glory of the Self, as promised in verse 3 above.

अनादित्वान्निर्गुणत्वात्परमात्मायमव्ययः ।

शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते ॥ ३१ ॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; अनादित्वात् being without beginning; निर्गुणत्वात् (and) being attributeless; अयम् this; अव्ययः indestructible; परमात्मा the supreme Spirit; शरीरस्थः अपि though dwelling in the body; न करोति does nothing (in fact); न nor; लिप्यते gets contaminated.

Arjuna, being without beginning and without attributes, this indestructible supreme Spirit, though dwelling in the body, in fact does nothing, nor gets contaminated. (31)

That which has no origin or cause, which is never born anew, and which has existed for ever, is called 'Anādi' or without beginning. And 'Nirguna' is that which lies entirely beyond Prakṛti and her Guṇas, and which has no real connection at any time, and under any circumstance whatsoever, with the Guṇas and their evolutes. The use of the two words 'Anāditvāt' and 'Nirgunatvāt', therefore, shows that the subject of discussion, viz., the Self, is both without beginning and without attributes; therefore, it is actionless, untainted and indestructible—wholly beyond the six forms of modifications such as birth, death and so on.

The demonstrative adjective 'Ayam' points to that which has been discussed immediately before. The use of this adjective along with the word 'Paramātmā', therefore, shows that the supreme Spirit referred to in this verse is the same as has been spoken of as 'Parameśwara' (the supreme Lord) in verse 27, as 'Īśwara' (Lord) in verse 28, as the 'Ātmā' (Self) in verse 29, and as 'Brahma' (the Supreme) in verse 30 above. In other words, the use

of 'Ayam' is intended to show that all these terms are identical in meaning.

It may be asked here: If all these terms refer to the same entity, why was it necessary to use different words for the same thing? Our submission in this connection is that in verse 3 above the Lord undertook to reveal to Arjuna the character and glory of the 'Kṣetrajña' (the knowing Self). Therefore, the Lord has deliberately used different words expressive of the divine principle in order to reveal the essential character of the Kṣetrajña, which is identical with the supreme eternal Spirit.

In reality, the Self has no connection whatsoever with the Guṇas of Prakṛti and their evolutes in the form of the intellect, mind, senses and the body; it exists entirely beyond the Guṇas. Just as ether, though present in the clouds, is not their originator, nor is it affected by them, even so the Self is never the doer of actions nor does it get contaminated by the bodies. The Lord Himself elucidates this point in the next two verses with the help of illustrations.

In support of His statement that the Self, though residing in the body, does not get contaminated by it, the Lord further says:—

यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्म्यादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते ।

सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथाऽऽत्मा नोपलिप्यते ॥ ३२ ॥

यथा as; सर्वगतम् आकाशम् the all-pervading ether; सौक्ष्म्यात् by reason of its subtlety; न उपलिप्यते is not tainted; तथा so; देहे in the body; सर्वत्र every-where; अवस्थितः seated; आत्मा the Self; न उपलिप्यते is not affected (by the attributes of the body owing to its attributeless character).

As the all-pervading ether is not tainted by reason of its subtlety, so seated everywhere in the body, the Self is not affected by the attributes of the body due to its attributeless character. (32)

By the analogy of ether, the verse permeating the entire body, and because proves the stainless character of the Self. it is extremely subtle and exists entirely beyond the Guṇas, the Self is not affected present in the air, fire, water and earth, in the least by the good and evil qualities of the intellect, mind, senses and the good and evil qualities, even so though body.

The Lord now explains how the Self is not the doer, though dwelling in the body.

यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः ।

क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ॥ ३३ ॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; यथा as; एकः रविः the one sun; इमम् this; कृत्स्नम् entire; लोकम् universe; प्रकाशयति lights; तथा so; क्षेत्री the (one) Ātmā or Self; कृत्स्नम् क्षेत्रम् the entire Kṣetra (Field); प्रकाशयति illumines.

Arjuna, as the one sun illumines this entire universe, so the one Ātmā (Spirit) illumines the whole Kṣetra (Field). (33)

The illustration of the sun has been used in this verse to demonstrate the non-doership of the Self, and the qualification 'Ekah' to bring out its non-dual character. That is to say, just as the one sun lights up the entire universe, so does the one Self infuse life and activity into the whole world of matter referred to in verses 5 and 6 above under the name of 'Kṣetra' and its evolutes. And through different mental apparatuses the Self appears to manifest itself differently in different bodies. Nevertheless, like the sun, the Self neither performs the actions pertaining to the bodies nor does it cause them to be performed, nor is it tainted by evils like duality or partiality etc. That immortal Self ever remains pure, conscious, actionless, immutable, unchanged, impartial and stainless under every circumstance.

Having thrown light on the six points raised in verse 3 above, the Lord now winds up the chapter, holding out God-Realization as the reward of fully grasping the whole teaching contained therein.

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरं

ज्ञानचक्षुषा ।

भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुर्यान्ति ते परम् ॥ ३४ ॥

एवम् thus; क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोः between the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajña; अन्तरम् the difference; च and; भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षम् (the phenomenon of) liberation from Prakṛti

with her evolutes; ये whosoever; ज्ञानचक्षुषा with the eye of wisdom; विदुः perceive; ते they; परम् the Supreme (Brahma or God); यन्ति attain.

Those who thus perceive with the eye of wisdom the difference between the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajñā, and the phenomenon of liberation from Prakṛti with her evolutes, reach the supreme eternal Spirit. (34)

The compound word 'Jñānachakṣuṣā' in this verse refers to that realization of Truth which in the opinion of the Lord as given in verse 2 above constitutes true Knowledge, nay, which has been declared in V. 16 as the means of dispelling ignorance, and which is attained by such means as 'Amānitva' (absence of pride) etc.

By means of such wisdom one is able to realize that the cosmic body consisting of the twenty-four categories, beginning with the five subtle elements, enumerated in verse 5, is known by the name of 'Kṣetra'; that it is knowable, subject to change, perishable, mutable, material and transient; whereas the 'Kṣetrajñā' (the Soul) is its knower, conscious, changeless, actionless, eternal, imperishable, unattached, pure, of the same stuff as Knowledge, and one; that the two being wholly diverse in character, the Kṣetrajñā is entirely different from the 'Kṣetra'; that the apparent identity of the two is rooted in ignorance; that, in reality, the 'Kṣetrajñā' has no connection whatsoever with the 'Kṣetra'. This is what is meant by perceiving with the eye of wisdom the difference between the 'Kṣetra' and the 'Kṣetrajñā'.

Of the three components of the compound word 'Bhūtaprakṛtimokṣam', 'Bhūta' stands for the entire realm of objective reality, which is an evolute of Prakṛti; whereas 'Prakṛti' represents the seed of this creation. Therefore, 'Bhūtaprakṛti-

mokṣa' means complete liberation from Prakṛti and her evolutes. And while realizing in the aforesaid manner the difference between the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajñā, when the soul gets disunited from 'Prakṛti' and established in identity with its real self, the supreme Spirit, one is said to have known liberation from Prakṛti with her evolutes.

The dreaming man, on being reminded anyhow of his waking state, comes to know that he was dreaming; therefore, he wakes up the moment it strikes him that waking in his real body is the only means of escape from the woes of the dream state. Even so the Jñānayogi or the practitioner following the path of Knowledge, while perceiving the difference between the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajñā, comes to realize at the same time that his apparent connection with the Kṣetra was due to his having erroneously taken it to be real, therefore, riddance from such connection consists in getting established in identity with one's real or divine self, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. Such a man is said to have come to know his liberation from Prakṛti with her evolutes.

The moment this truth is realized the entire realm of objective reality disappears along with ignorance, and God-Realization takes place immediately.

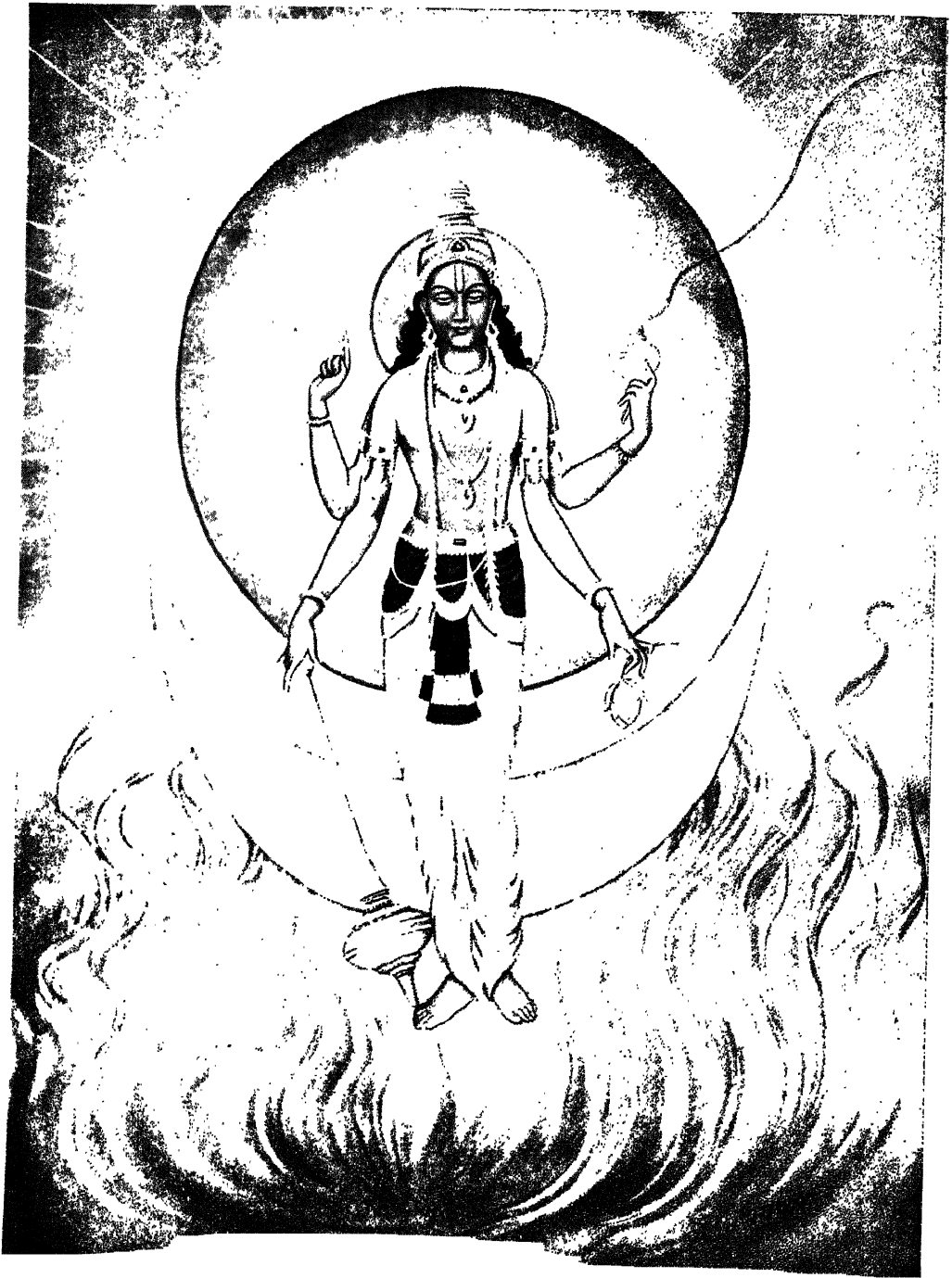
ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञविभागयोगो
नाम त्रयोदशोऽध्यायः ॥ १३ ॥

*Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma,
the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa
and Arjuna, ends the thirteenth chapter entitled
"The Yoga of Discrimination between
the Kṣetra and the Kṣetrajñā".*



Kalyana-Kalpataru

God as Effulgence



“The light in the sun, that illumines the entire solar world, and that which shines in the moon and that too which shines in the fire, know that light to be Mine.”

(XV. 12)

Chapter XIV

The present chapter discusses matters relating to the three Guṇas,—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—viz., their essential character, evolutes, cause and power, how and under what circumstances they throw the embodied soul into bondage, as well as the nature of that bondage, and, finally, the marks of the soul who has risen above the Guṇas and realized God. In order to inculcate the advisability, in the first instance, viz., during the period of one's Sādhana or spiritual discipline, of shaking off Rajas and Tamas and adopting Sattva, and finally of giving up all connection with the Guṇas, the three Guṇas have been separately dealt with. Hence this chapter has been given the title of "The Yoga of Division of the three Guṇas."

In verses 1 and 2 of this chapter the Lord glorifies Wisdom, the discussion of which follows later, and introduces the subject. Detailing in the third and fourth the process of evolution of all beings from the union of Prakṛti and Puruṣa, in the fifth the Lord declares the three Guṇas,—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas,—as the cause of bondage of the embodied soul. Verses 6 to 8 discuss in their order of sequence the nature of the three Guṇas and the way in which they bind the Jīvātma. Mentioning in the ninth which Guṇa drives the soul to what, and showing in the tenth how one Guṇa prevails over the other two, the Lord discusses in verses 11 to 13 the marks indicating the preponderance of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas respectively. Discussing in the fourteenth and the fifteenth the fate of the man who dies during the preponderance of each of the three Guṇas, the Lord details in the sixteenth the corresponding fruits of actions of the Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic types. Declaring in the seventeenth that the quality of Sattva gives rise to knowledge, the quality of Rajas begets greed and the quality of Tamas breeds error, stupor and ignorance, the Lord details in the eighteenth the corresponding fate of the Jīvātmā established in each of the three Guṇas. Verses 19 to 20 proclaim the reward of viewing actions as being performed by the Guṇas, and the Ātmā as standing beyond the Guṇas and a non-doer, as well as of transcending the three Guṇas. In verse 21, Arjuna inquires of the Lord about the marks and conduct of one who has risen above the Guṇas, and about the means of rising above them. In response to this, the Lord discusses in verses 22 to 25 the marks and conduct of the man who has risen above the three Guṇas, and points out in the twenty-sixth the means as well as the reward of rising above them. The Lord then concludes the chapter by declaring Himself in the last or twenty-seventh verse as the foundation of Brahma, immortality, and so on inasmuch as they are all identical with Him.

In the course of Chapter XIII, the Lord first of all defined 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña' and declared their knowledge alone as true Knowledge, and accordingly discussed the denotation, character, and evolutes of the 'Kṣetra' and the order of evolution of its constituents and the essential character and glory of the 'Kṣetrajña'. Introducing the topic of the Guṇas under the name of Prakṛti and Puruṣa in verse 19, the Lord declared the three Guṇas as evolutes of Prakṛti, and added in the twenty-first that attachment to the three Guṇas alone was responsible for one's repeated birth in good and evil wombs. In this connection one is naturally tempted to know the diverse characteristics of the three Guṇas, how they bind the Jīvātmā to the body, the type of birth one attains through attachment to a particular Guṇa, the means of ridding oneself of the three Guṇas, and the marks and conduct of the soul who has been rid of them. Chapter XIV has, therefore, been introduced to elucidate all these points. The same Jñāna or Wisdom that has been dealt with in Chapter XIII has to be clearly brought out and elaborately discussed in this chapter; therefore, glorifying that Wisdom in two verses, the Lord first of all undertakes to resume its discussion,

श्रीभगवानुवाच

परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।

यज्ज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिमितो गताः ॥ १ ॥

ज्ञानानाम् of wisdoms; उत्तमम् the best; परम् supreme; ज्ञानम् wisdom; भूयः again; प्रवक्ष्यामि I shall discuss; यत् which; ज्ञात्वा knowing, acquiring; सर्वे all; मुनयः sages; इतः (liberated) from this (mundane existence); पराम् highest; सिद्धिम् perfection; गताः have attained.

Śrī Bhagavān said: I shall discuss once more the supreme wisdom, the best of all wisdoms, acquiring which all sages have attained highest perfection, being liberated from this mundane existence. (1)

The word 'Jñānānām' in this verse covers the entire body of teachings, varied in character, contained in the Vedas, Smṛti texts, Purāṇas and other sacred literature, and intended to throw light on different subjects. Of these, the Lord undertakes in this verse to discuss that true wisdom which, while differentiating between Prakṛti and Puruṣa, reveals the true character of Puruṣa. This wisdom brings direct realization of God and, freeing the embodied soul from the bondage of Prakṛti, liberates it for ever; hence it

has been declared as the best and highest of all wisdoms.

The use of the indeclinable 'Bhūyah' is intended to show that this wisdom has been discussed even before; but being most profound and abstruse, it is difficult to understand. Hence it is taken up for discussion again in order that it may be fully understood. The method of exposition, of course, is different this time.

The word 'Munayaḥ' stands for those wise men who have attained the supreme

state through the practice of Jñānayoga return' etc. or the discipline of Knowledge; and the highest perfection reached by these wise men is the same which is spoken of as 'the attainment of supreme Brahma', and which has been variously described as 'supreme Peace', 'everlasting happiness' and the 'state from which there is no

The word 'Itaḥ' (hence) signifies mortal existence. The use of this word shows that the sages referred to in this verse have ceased for all time to maintain any connection with this woeful world consisting of death.

इदं ज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य मम साधर्म्यमागताः ।

सर्गेऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च ॥ २ ॥

इदम् this; ज्ञानम् wisdom; उपाश्रित्य taking recourse to or practising; मम My; साधर्म्यम् Being; आगताः (persons who have) entered into; सर्गे at the cosmic dawn; न उपजायन्ते are not born again; च and; प्रलये during the cosmic night or final dissolution; अपि even; न nor; व्यथन्ति feel disturbed.

Those who, by practising this wisdom, have entered into My Being are not born again at the cosmic dawn nor feel disturbed even during the cosmic night. (2)

The demonstrative adjective 'Idam' has been used before 'Jñānam' in order to make it clear that whatever has been stated in this verse is in praise of that very wisdom which has already been discussed in Chapter XIII. and is going to be discussed in the present Chapter as well. And those who, having realized in the light of the wisdom referred to in this context the true nature of Prakṛti and Puruṣa, have reached entirely beyond Prakṛti and her Guṇas, and remain established in identity with the absolute, formless supreme Spirit, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, are said to have taken recourse to or practised this wisdom.

The words 'Mama sādharmaṃyamaḡatāḥ' in the present verse convey the same idea as has been expressed by 'Parāṃ

Siddhim Gatāḥ' (attained highest perfection) in the preceding one. That is to say, realizing the attributeless aspect of God as one's own self is what is meant by attaining His Being.

The latter half of this verse is intended to convey that those who, taking recourse to and practising the wisdom taught in this chapter, have realized the supreme eternal Spirit as their very self, cease to have any connection with the creation or dissolution of the universe. For the principal factor determining one's birth in good or evil wombs is contact with the Guṇas, and liberated souls stand entirely beyond the Guṇas; hence there is no return for them. And when there is no birth, the question of death does not arise at all.

Thus undertaking to teach that wisdom again, and glorifying it, the Lord now introduces the subject by declaring in two verses how the entire world emanates from Prakṛti and Puruṣa.

मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन् गर्भे दधाम्यहम् ।

सम्भवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥ ३ ॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; मम My; महद् ब्रह्म primordial Nature known as the great Brahma; योनिः (is) the womb (of all creatures); अहम् (and) I; तस्मिन् (and) in that (womb); गर्भम् the seed (of all life); दधामि place; ततः from that (union of Matter and Spirit); सर्वभूतानाम् of all beings; सम्भवः the birth; भवति comes to be.

My primordial Nature, known as the great Brahma, is the womb of all creatures; in that womb I place the seed of all life. The creation of all beings follows from that union of Matter and Spirit, O Arjuna. (3)

The substantive 'Brahma', qualified by the adjective 'Mahat', stands for primordial Nature, which is the cause of entire creation and is also termed as 'Avyakta' (the Unmanifest) and 'Pradhāna' (the primary cause). The idea has already been explained in the commentary on IX. 7. By calling it 'Mama' (Mine), the Lord shows that this Prakṛti has been connected with Him from time without beginning. The material or efficient cause and the womb of a mother are called 'Yoni'. By giving this name to Prakṛti the Lord shows that she is the material cause as well as the womb of the various bodies of all living beings.

The word 'Garbham' in this verse stands for the totality of conscious selves or egos referred to in Chapter VII as 'Parā Prakṛti' or the higher Nature. And linking the egos that had been lying

merged in God along with their Saṃskāras or latencies during the cosmic night, with Prakṛti at the cosmic dawn is what is meant by placing the seed of all life in the womb known as Prakṛti.

The demonstrative adverb 'Tataḥ' (thence) refers to the union of Matter and Spirit brought about in this way by God; while 'Sarvabhūtānām' stands for the totality of living beings appearing in various forms, e.g., celestials, human beings, beasts, birds and so on according to the latencies of their past deeds. 'Sambhavaḥ' signifies the appearance of these creatures in various subtle or astral forms through this conjunction of Matter and Spirit. The first offspring of this union, appearing at the dawn of creation, is Hiraṇyagarbha (the astral form of Brahmā, the Creator) and the subtle bodies of other creatures follow next.

सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः सम्भवन्ति याः ।

तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं बीजप्रदः पिता ॥ ४ ॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kunti, Arjuna; सर्वयोनिषु in all the species (of various kinds); याः as many; मूर्तयः embodied beings; सम्भवन्ति appear; महद् ब्रह्म the great Brahma or Prakṛti; तासाम् their; योनिः (is) the conceiving mother; अहम् (and) I (am); बीजप्रदः पिता the seed-giving father.

Of all embodied beings that appear in all the species of various kinds, Arjuna, Prakṛti or Nature is the conceiving Mother, while I am the seed-giving Father. (4)

The word 'Mūrtayah' stands for the bodies of different shapes and colours and totality of living beings clothed in various belonging to different species, such as

celestials, human beings, Rākṣasas or forms of these beings are all constituted demons, beasts, birds and so on; and of Matter, while the conscious spirit 'Sambhavanti' denotes their incarnation dwelling in them is a particle of God. It is the union of Prakṛti and God that brings forth all embodied beings; hence

By the latter half of this verse the Lord conveys that the subtle and gross Father.

In verse 21 of Chapter XIII it was stated that attachment to the Guṇas is responsible for the birth of the embodied soul in good or evil wombs. Following this line of thought, the Lord spoke in verses 3 and 4 above of embodied souls being born in species of various kinds; but the verses contain no reference to the Guṇas. Therefore, while introducing this topic in order to make it clear what these Guṇas are, what is meant by getting attached to them, attachment to what particular Guṇa causes good birth or otherwise and so on, the Lord in course of the next four verses first of all declares that the Guṇas are evolved from Prakṛti, then mentions them separately by name and lastly discusses their nature as well as the way in which they bind the Jīva.

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसम्भवाः ।

निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥ ५ ॥

महाबाहो O mighty-armed one, Arjuna; सत्त्वम् the quality of Sattva (harmony); रजः the quality of Rajas (motion); तमः (and) the quality of Tamas (inertia); इति these; प्रकृतिसम्भवाः born of Nature; गुणाः (three) qualities; अव्ययम् देहिनम् the imperishable Soul; देहे to the body; निबध्नन्ति tie down.

Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—these three qualities born of Nature tie down the imperishable soul to the body, Arjuna. (5)

The use of the words 'Sattvam', 'Rajas' and 'Tamas' is intended to point out the diversity, the names and the number of the Guṇas. That is to say, the Guṇas are three in number, they are known by the names of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, and they are diverse in character. They are called 'Prakṛti-Sambhava' (born of Nature) in order to show that they are all evolutes of Prakṛti, and that the whole material creation is an amplification of these three Guṇas.

The word 'Dehinam' is intended to convey that the Guṇas react only on those who look upon the body as their self; while the use of the adjective

'Avyayam' with reference to the same shows that in reality the soul as such is immutable, hence there can be no bondage for it. It regards itself as bound only due to ignorance that has haunted it from time without beginning. These three Guṇas induce in the soul a sense of possession, attachment and a feeling of identification in respect of enjoyments and bodies corresponding to themselves; this is what is meant by their tying the soul to the body. In other words, what binds the soul is its feeling of identification, attachment and sense of possession in respect of bodies evolved from the three Guṇas, and of objects connected therewith.

The Lord now depicts the essential character of Sattva, and the way in which it binds the soul.

तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।

सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥ ६ ॥

अनघ O sinless one, Arjuna; तत्र of these Guṇas; सत्त्वं the quality of Sattva (harmony); निर्मलत्वात् because of its being immaculate; प्रकाशकम् (is) illuminating; अनामयम् (and) flawless; सुखसङ्गेन through attachment (i. e., identification) with joy; च and; ज्ञानसङ्गेन through attachment (i. e., identification) with wisdom; बध्नाति it binds.

Of these Sattva, being immaculate, is illuminating and flawless, Arjuna; it binds through identification with joy and wisdom. (6)

The quality of Sattva is absolutely pure in character and untainted by any form of evil; hence it is illuminating and free from morbidity of any kind. It lends illumination to the mind and the senses, and uprooting sorrow, distraction, depravities, evil propensities and vices, brings peace. When the quality of Sattva is in the ascendant, the restlessness of the mind automatically disappears, and feeling disgusted with and losing all interest in the world, man gets absorbed in the thought of the supreme Spirit, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. Besides this, his mind and all his senses are rid of sorrow and lethargy, and become more animated. It is these characteristics of Sattva that are indicated by the word 'Nirmalatvāt' and the word 'Sattvam' has been qualified by the adjectives 'Prakāśakam' and 'Anāmayam' in order to bring out the essential character of Sattva.

The word 'Sukha', forming part of the compound word 'Sukhasangena' in this

verse, denotes the Sattvic form of joy defined in verses 36 and 37 of Chapter XVIII. During the experience of this joy the feeling of identification that the soul comes to develop with it arrests the progress of the soul on the path of spiritual evolution and debars it from the attainment of liberation in the current life. This is what is meant by the quality of Sattva binding the soul through identification with joy.

'Jñāna' means the faculty of knowledge. On the unfoldment of this faculty the feeling of identification that the soul comes to develop with it debars it from attaining the state which lies beyond the three Guṇas. This is what is meant by the Sattvaguna binding the soul through identification with wisdom.

By addressing Arjuna as 'Anagha' (sinless one), the Lord shows that being sinless by nature, Arjuna had no fear of bondage.

The Lord now proceeds to discuss the essential character of Rajas and shows how it binds the soul.

रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवं ।

तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम् ॥ ७ ॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; रागात्मकम् of the nature of passion; रजः the quality of Rajas; तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् (as) born of cupidity and attachment; विद्धि know; तत् it; देहिनाम् (this) soul; कर्मसङ्गेन through attachment to actions (and their fruit); निबध्नाति binds.

Arjuna, know the quality of Rajas, which is of the nature of passion, as born of cupidity and attachment. It binds the soul through attachment to actions and their fruit. (7)

The quality of Rajas manifests itself in the form of passion or attachment. Rāga or passion is its gross manifestation, hence the quality of Rajas has been characterized as being of the nature of passion.

Here it may be urged that desire itself has been declared elsewhere as an offspring of Rajoguna (vide III. 37 and XIV. 12). How, then, are we to understand that Rajoguna is begotten of 'cupidity' and 'attachment'? In this connection it may be submitted that the quality of Rajas develops through cupidity and attachment, while cupidity and attachment in their turn are developed through Rajoguna. They are interdependent like the seed and the tree. Of these, Rajas is analogous to the seed; while cupidity, attachment etc. correspond to the tree. The seed is a product of the tree, and yet it is the cause of the tree as well. It is in order to make this point clear that at some places Rajoguna has been declared to be the cause of desire etc., while at other places desire etc.

have been declared to be the cause of Rajoguna. The compound word 'Tṛṣṇāsanga-samudbhavam' in this very verse can be interpreted in both ways. If it is interpreted to mean that which is born of Tṛṣṇā (desire) and Sanga (attachment)—तृष्णासङ्गसं समुद्भवति—Rajoguna turns out to be an effect of the latter. If, on the other hand, it is taken to mean that from which Tṛṣṇā (desire) and Sanga (attachment) emanate—तृष्णासङ्गयोः समुद्भवो यस्मात्—Rajoguna turns out to be the cause. On the analogy of the seed and the tree, both these conclusions are true, hence 'Tṛṣṇāsangasamudbhavam' can be interpreted both ways.

'Karmasanga' means establishing one's connection with actions and their fruit by claiming to be their doer, and expecting a particular fruit from them. Through this connection with actions and their fruit Rajoguna keeps the soul tied down to this mundane existence consisting of birth and death. This is what the Lord seeks to convey by the latter half of this verse.

The Lord now describes the character of Tamoguna and the way in which it binds the soul.

तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।

प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ॥ ८ ॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; सर्वदेहिनाम् of all those who look upon the body as their own self; मोहनम् the deluder; तमः the quality of Tamas (inertia); तु however; अज्ञानजम् (as) born of ignorance; विद्धि know; तत् it; प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिः through error, sloth and sleep; निबध्नाति binds (the soul).

And know Tamas, the deluder of all those who look upon the body as their own self, as born of ignorance. It binds the soul through error, sloth and sleep, Arjuna. (8)

The quality of Tamas (inertia) stupefies the mind and senses, depriving them of their cognitive faculty. This is what is meant by the Lord when He speaks of Tamoguna as deluding those who regard the body as their self. All those living beings who have connection with the mind and senses and identify themselves with the body or claim it as their own regard their own self as benumbed when their mind and senses get benumbed during sleep. Those liberated souls, however, who have ceased to regard the mind, senses and body as their own self no longer recognize any connection with them; hence the Lord speaks of Tamoguna as the deluder of 'all those who look upon the body as their own self.'

Here it may be urged that verse 17 of this very chapter speaks of ignorance as a product of Tamoguna. How, then, are we to understand that Tamoguna has

its root in ignorance? In this connection it may be submitted that ignorance grows through Tamoguna and Tamoguna in its turn grows through ignorance. Like the seed and the tree they too are interdependent: ignorance is analogous to the seed, while Tamoguna corresponds to the tree. Therefore, at some places Tamoguna is stated to be the cause, while at others it is declared to be a product of ignorance.

Fruitless activity of the mind and senses and neglect of duties enjoined by the Śāstras or sacred books is called 'Pramāda' (error). Ālasya is inactivity or disinclination to perform one's duty. And drowsiness, the state of dream and deep sleep—all these are covered by 'Nidrā.' Restraining the soul through all these from practices leading to liberation, Tamoguna keeps it tied down to mundane existence consisting of birth and death. This is what is meant by binding the soul through error, sloth and sleep.

Delineating thus the character of the three Guṇas,—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas,—and showing how they bind the soul, the Lord now describes the natural function of the three Guṇas.

सत्त्वं सुखे सञ्जयति रजः कर्मणि भारत ।

ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे सञ्जयत्युत ॥ ९ ॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; सत्त्वं the quality of Sattva; सुखे to joy; सञ्जयति drives; रजः (and) the quality of Rajas; कर्मणि to action; तमः (while) the quality of Tamas; तु on the other hand; ज्ञानम् wisdom; आवृत्य obscuring; प्रमादे to error; उत as well as (sleep and sloth); सञ्जयति incites.

Sattva drives one to joy, and Rajas to action; while Tamas, clouding wisdom, incites one to error as well as sleep and sloth. (9)

'Sukha' here denotes the Sattvic type of joy (XVIII. 36, 37). Weaning man from worldly enjoyments and activities, as well as from error, sloth and sleep,

Sattvaguna induces Sattvic joy through contemplation on the Self etc. This is what is meant [when the Lord speaks of Sattvaguna as driving one to joy.

'Karma' stands for action with an interested motive enjoined by the Śāstras (and bearing fruit in the form of enjoyments of this world and the next). Awakening the desire for enjoyments of various kinds, Rajogūṇa stirs man to activity with a view to obtaining those enjoyments. This is what the Lord means when He speaks of Rajogūṇa as rousing man to action.

When Tamogūṇa preponderates, it sometimes robs man of his faculty of judgment, which determines what is right and what is wrong; while at others it induces sleep by dulling his mind and senses. This is what it seeks to convey when the

verse speaks of Tamogūṇa as darkening one's wisdom. And inducing delinquency and prompting man to idle pursuits—this is what is meant by inciting him to error.

The particle 'Tu' in this verse is intended to show that Tamogūṇa does not rest contented with merely obscuring man's wisdom, but does something else too; while 'Uta' shows that just as obscuring man's wisdom it incites him to error, even so it induces sleep and sloth. That is to say, when it clouds man's judgment, it incites him to error; and when it dulls and benumbs his consciousness in the shape of alertness of his mind and senses, it induces lethargy and sleep.

The next verse shows the way in which these Guṇas operate when they actually react on the Jīva.

रजस्तमश्चामिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत ।

रजः सत्त्वं तमश्चैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा ॥ १० ॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; रजः the quality of Rajas; च and; तमः the quality of Tamas; अभिभूय overpowering; सत्त्वं the quality of Sattva; भवति prevails; सत्त्वं (overpowering) the quality of Sattva; च and; तमः the quality of Tamas; रजः the quality of Rajas (prevails); तथा एव even so; सत्त्वं (overpowering) the quality of Sattva; रजः (and) the quality of Rajas; तमः the quality of Tamas (prevails).

Overpowering Rajas and Tamas, Arjuna, Sattva prevails; overpowering Sattva and Tamas, Rajas prevails; even so, overpowering Sattva and Rajas, Tamas prevails. *

(10)

When the quality of Sattva begins to being flooded with illumination, disfunction, thwarting the operation of Rajas and Tamas, the body, senses and mind, state of extreme tranquillity and happi-

* Śrīmad Bhāgavatā mentions the following ten factors as conducive to the growth of the Guṇas:—

आगमोऽपः प्रजा देशः कालः कर्म च जन्म च ।

ध्यानं मन्त्रोऽथ संस्कारो दशैते गुणहेतवः ॥

(XI. xiii. 10)

"The sacred lore, water, progeny, place, time, occupation, birth, thought, mystic formulas and purificatory rites—these ten factors are conducive to the Guṇas, i. e., to their growth" That is to say, these factors promote that very Guṇa with which they are associated.

ness. Hence during that time the effects of Rajoguna, viz., greed, activity and the craving for enjoyment etc., and those of Tamoguna, viz., sleep, sloth and error etc., cannot appear. In this way, overpowering Rajas and Tamas, the quality of Sattva gives rise to knowledge, illumination and happiness etc. This is what is meant by the preponderance of Sattva over Rajas and Tamas.

Even so, when the quality of Rajas begins to function, suspending the operation of Sattva and Tamas, the body, senses and mind are seized with a spell of restlessness, unrest, greed, the craving for enjoyment and an irresistible urge to undertake activities of various kinds. Hence the effects of Sattvaguna, viz., illumination, discrimination and tran-

quillity etc. almost disappear. The effects of Tamoguna, viz., sleep and sloth etc., also get suppressed. This is what is meant by the quality of Rajas preponderating over Sattva and Tamas.

Similarly, when the quality of Tamas begins to function, foiling the operation of Sattva and Rajas, dullness etc. prevail in the body, senses and mind; one feels inclined to lapse into error and the faculty of judgment gets blurred. Hence the effects of Sattva, viz., illumination and knowledge, and those of Rajas, viz., the propensity to work and the craving for enjoyment etc., almost vanish; they are no longer able to manifest themselves. This is what is meant by the quality of Tamas prevailing over Sattva and Rajas.

The preceding verse thus showed how each of the three Gunas prevails over the other two. Here one would naturally feel inclined to know the marks of the preponderance of each Guna; therefore, the Lord, first of all, discusses the marks of the predominance of Sattvaguna.

सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन् प्रकाश उपजायते ।

ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद् विवृद्धं सत्त्वमित्युत ॥ ११ ॥

यदा when; अस्मिन् देहे in this body; सर्वद्वारेषु (as well as) in the mind and senses; प्रकाशः light; ज्ञानम् (and) discernment; उपजायते dawns; तदा then; इति thus; विद्यात् one should know; उत that; सत्त्वम् the quality of Sattva; विवृद्धम् (is) predominant.

When light and discernment dawn in this body, as well as in the mind and senses, then one should know that Sattva is predominant. (11)

When the quality of Sattva is predominant, man should scrupulously endeavour to devote his mind to the practices of meditation and adoration etc. Then alone can the flow of Sattvaguna endure for a considerable time. If, on the other hand, he neglects this opportunity, Tamoguna or Rajoguna may soon over-power it and start functioning itself.

The use of the demonstrative adjective 'Asmin' with 'Dehe' is intended to bring out the importance of human birth. The intention is to show that an opportunity for the growth of Sattvaguna can be had in the human body alone, and it is in this birth alone that man can attain liberation with the help of that Guna. Creatures born in other species do not enjoy this privilege.

Height of animation and the feeling of lightness in the body and the growth of perspicuity and keenness in the mind and senses—this is what is meant by the dawn of light. And the dawn of wisdom or discernment consists in the awakening of the faculty of judgment distinguishing between truth and falsehood, right and wrong. When light and wisdom both make their appearance, the mind automatically recoils from the world and is flooded as it were with quietude, joy and tranquillity, and the feelings of attraction and aversion, sorrow and grief, anxiety, fear, fidgetiness, sleep, sloth and error etc. almost disappear.

Describing thus the marks indicating the growth of Sattvaguna, the Lord now discusses the marks which betoken the growth of Rajoguna.

लोभः प्रवृत्तिरारम्भः कर्मणामशमः स्पृहा ।

रजस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे भरतर्षभ ॥ १२ ॥

भरतर्षभ O chief of Bharatas, Arjuna; रजसि विवृद्धे with the preponderance of Rajoguna; लोभः greed; प्रवृत्तिः activity; कर्मणाम् आरम्भः undertaking of actions with an interested motive; अशमः restlessness; स्पृहा (and) a thirst for enjoyment; एतानि (all these); जायन्ते appear.

With the preponderance of Rajas, Arjuna, greed, inactivity, undertaking of actions with an interested motive, restlessness and a thirst for enjoyment make their appearance. (12)

Greed is lust for wealth, prompted by which man is ever busy devising means of multiplying his possessions, refuses to part with them even when there is a suitable occasion for doing so and, while engaged in amassing wealth, seeks even to usurp the rights of others, minding not what is right and what is wrong. The urge or inclination, felt in the mind, to undertake various forms of activities is called 'Pravṛtti'; and 'Sprhā' consists in recognizing any mundane object as indispensable for oneself. With the preponderance of Rajoguna, when the effects of Sattvaguna, viz., perspicuity, discrimination and tranquillity

etc., and those of Tamoguna, viz., sleep, sloth and so on, get neutralized, man begins to feel the need for various forms of enjoyment. His mind is swayed by greed and obsessed with a strong desire for accumulation of wealth, he begins to feel the urge for various forms of activities, his mind becomes restless, and he takes to various activities in response to that urge. This is what happens during the preponderance of Rajoguna.

The use of the vocative 'Bharatarṣabha' for Arjuna is intended to convey that being the chief of Bharatas, Arjuna was free from evils like greed etc., which are products of Rajoguna.

Describing thus the marks which indicate the preponderance of Rajoguna, the Lord now discusses the marks of the growth of Tamoguna.

अप्रकाशोऽप्रवृत्तिश्च प्रमादो मोह एव च ।

तमस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे कुरुनन्दन ॥ १३ ॥

कुरुनन्दन O delighter of Kurus, Arjuna; तमसि विवृद्धे with the growth of Tamoguna; अप्रकाशः obtuseness of mind and senses; अप्रवृत्तिः disinclination to perform one's obligatory duties; च and; प्रमादः frivolity; च and; मोहः the torpid state of mind; एतानि (all) these; एव indeed; जायन्ते appear.

With the growth of Tamas, Arjuna, obtuseness of the mind and senses, disinclination to perform one's obligatory duties, frivolity and stupor—all these appear. (13)

Perspicuity of the mind and senses is called 'Prakāśa' and the reverse of it, viz., obtuseness of the mind and senses, is called 'Aprakāśa'. This should be taken to include lack of the other marks of Sattvaguna. 'Apravṛtti' is the antithesis of Pravṛtti, referred to in the preceding verse as an effect of Rajoguna. Thus it means want of inclination to perform one's obligatory duties. Absence of the other marks of Rajoguna should also be taken as included in it. 'Pramāda' means neglect of duties enjoined by the Śāstras and addiction to idle pursuits. The torpid state of mind, which obscures one's judgment, and the state of sleep are covered

by 'Moha'. When Tamoguna preponderates, the mind and senses become blank, man finds no relish in activity of any kind; he feels inclined to remain idle and do nothing. He neglects his duties and indulges in frivolous pursuits; His mind gets stupefied, his memory fails him. He is overtaken by drowsiness or sleep or lapses into a dream; his judgment takes leave of him and his faculty of understanding is also lost. All these marks appear when Tamoguna is in the ascendant. Hence when any of these marks appears in man, he should know that Tamoguna has the upper hand in him.

Describing thus the respective marks which indicate the growth of the three Gunas, the Lord now points out in the following two verses the destiny which awaits a man who dies during the preponderance of a particular Guṇa.

यदा सत्त्वे प्रवृद्धे तु प्रलयं याति देहभृत् ।

तदोत्तमविदां लोकानमलान् प्रतिपद्यते ॥ १४ ॥

यदा when; देहभृत् (this) man; सत्त्वे प्रवृद्धे during the preponderance of Sattvaguna; प्रलयम् (his) death; याति meets; तदा then; तु indeed; उत्तमविदान् attained by men of noble deeds; अमलान् लोकान् the stainless ethereal worlds (such as heaven etc.); प्रतिपद्यते he obtains.

When a man dies during the preponderance of Sattva, he obtains the stainless ethereal-worlds (heaven, etc.) attained by men of noble deeds. (14)

The use of the adverbs 'Yadā' and 'Tadā' is intended to convey that the verse describes the destiny of those who, though naturally established in any other Guṇa, give up the ghost during the preponderance of Sattvaguna. When the soul of such a man along with his mind, senses and vital airs leaves his physical body at a time when the quality of Sattva is predominant in him due to the

impelling force of some past Karma or any other cause, that is to say, when 'light' and 'wisdom' prevail in his body, senses and mind as described in verse 11 above, he is said to have died during the preponderance of Sattvaguna.

The word 'Dehabhrt' signifies that destinies of various kinds in the form of rebirth await only those who are embodied, i.e., who look upon the body as their own self or claim it as their own. Those liberated souls who do not thus regard the body as their self are never born again.

The use of the adjective 'Amalān' with the substantive 'Lokān' shows that

the worlds attained by those who give up the ghost during the preponderance of Sattvaguna are free from impurities, i.e., evils and afflictions of all kinds; they are full of ethereal light, pure and Sāttvic in essence. The word 'Uttama', forming part of the compound word 'Uttamavidām', stands for actions and worship enjoined by the Śāstras or sacred books; and 'Uttamavidām' refers to those who know the secret of such actions and worship, i.e., perform them in a disinterested spirit. Due to association with Sattvaguna, he who dies during the preponderance of that quality migrates to those very regions that are attained by such men through their disinterested action and worship.

रजसि प्रलयं गत्वा कर्मसङ्गिषु जायते ।

तथा प्रलीनस्तमसि मूढयोनिषु जायते ॥ १५ ॥

रजसि during the preponderance of Rajas; प्रलयम् death; गत्वा meeting; कर्मसङ्गिषु among those attached to action; जायते he is born; तथा (even) so; तमसि during the preponderance of Tamas; प्रलीनः dead; मूढयोनिषु in the species of stupid creatures (such as insects, beasts etc.); जायते is reborn.

Dying when Rajas predominates, he is born among those attached to action; even so the man who has expired during the preponderance of Tamas is reborn in the species of stupid creatures, such as insects and beasts etc. (15)

When the soul of a man, along with his mind, senses and vital airs, casts off the physical body at a time when Rajasic feelings, such as greed, activity etc., mentioned in verse 12 above, are predominant, he is said to have died during the preponderance of Rajoguna. 'Karmasangiṣu' refers to men who are attached to actions and their fruit; therefore, birth among those who are attached to action means birth as a human being.

In the same way a man is said to have died during the predominance of Tamoguna when his soul, including his mind, senses and vital airs, abandons his physical body at a time when Tamasic propensities like frivolity etc., mentioned in verse 13 above, preponderate; and birth among Tamasic creatures such as moths and insects, beasts and birds, trees and creepers, etc., is what is meant by being born in the wombs of stupid creatures.

It has been pointed out above how death during the ascendancy of the three Guṇas,—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas,—yields different results. Hearing this, one is naturally tempted to know why one Guṇa should predominate now, and another at another time. In order to satisfy this curiosity the Lord says:—

कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम् ।

रजसस्तु फलं दुःखमज्ञानं तमसः फलम् ॥ १६ ॥

सुकृतस्य कर्मणः of a noble deed; तु indeed; सात्त्विकम् Sattvic or characterized by the quality of Sattva—such as joy, wisdom and dispassion etc. ; निर्मलम् stainless; फलम् reward; आहुः they declare; रजसः of the Rajasic type (of actions); फलम् fruit; दुःखम् suffering; तमसः (and) of the Tamasic type (of actions); फलम् result; अज्ञानम् (is stated to be) ignorance.

The reward of a righteous act, they say, is Sattvic and faultless (in the shape of joy, wisdom and dispassion etc.); sorrow is declared to be the fruit of a Rajasic act and ignorance, the fruit of a Tamasic act. (16)

The substantive 'Karmanah' qualified by the adjective 'Sukṛtasya', in this verse stands for those Sattvic actions that are enjoined by the Śāstras or sacred books and performed in a disinterested spirit. The Sattvic and faultless fruit of such actions is no other than the pure impulses of wisdom and dispassion frequently arising in the mind due to the impelling force of those actions, and the attainment, after death, of worlds full of ethereal light and free from all forms of sorrow and evil, referred to in the preceding verse.

Rajasic actions are those which are performed with a view to obtain enjoyments, are prompted by egotism and involve much exertion (XVIII. 24). They entail suffering in the form of exertion, not only during their performance, but continue to cause affliction even afterwards.

The tendencies formed as a result of these actions repeatedly awaken in the mind the Rajasic impulses of enjoyment, desire, greed and activity etc., which distract the mind and make it restless and miserable. Even enjoyments that are obtained as a result of these actions, though appearing as delightful through ignorance, are really full of woe. And the whirlpool of birth and death in

which one is repeatedly thrown in order to reap the fruit of these actions is unquestionably a great calamity. In this way these actions yield nothing but sorrow.

Again, Tamasic actions are those that are performed out of ignorance and without any forethought, and which are full of evils like violence etc. (XVIII. 25). The tendencies formed as a result of such actions darken the mind all the more and one is reborn after death in the species of stupid creatures, species in which the element of Tamas is predominant; this is what is meant by the statement that ignorance is the fruit of a Tamasic act.

Here it may be contended that while discussing the effects of the three Guṇas, the Lord has abruptly taken up the question of the consequences of one's actions, which appears to be a digression on His part. This is however, not the case. For in the foregoing verses the Lord has discussed the respective consequences of dying during the preponderance of each of the three Guṇas; therefore, a discussion of the tendencies of past actions responsible for the growth of a particular Guṇa was also essential. That is why the question of actions has been taken up. The intention is to show

that the Samskāras or tendencies of all the three types of actions,—viz., Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic,—remain stored up in the heart of every individual. Out of these, the type of Samskāras that come to the surface at a particular time stimulate corresponding impulses in the mind, and it is these impulses that take the form of actions. Actions give rise to Samskāras; the latter in their turn develop qualities of a corresponding type; these qualities determine our thought at the last moment; the thought of our last moment decides the nature of our next birth as well as the course of our

activities in that birth. This is how the cycle goes on moving. The special results that follow from the predominance of Sattvic and other thoughts at the last moment as pointed out in the foregoing verses are also dependent in a general way on the type of actions, Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic, done prior to that crucial moment; it is this idea that has been sought to be conveyed in the present verse, which is therefore in no way disconnected with the context. For it is the Guṇas and Karma both which determine one's birth in a good or evil womb (IV. 13).

Verses 11, 12 and 13 discussed the marks indicating the growth of the three Guṇas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas; thereafter the Lord pointed out the result of dying during the ascendancy of these Guṇas, one after another. This would naturally lead us to enquire why the dawn of wisdom etc. should be regarded as a token of the growth of qualities like Sattva etc. Therefore, in order to enable one to infer the existence of a cause from the appearance of its effect, qualities like Sattva etc. are being shown to be responsible for the appearance of wisdom etc.

सत्त्वात्संजायते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च ।

प्रमादमोहौ तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेव च ॥ १७ ॥

sattva from the quality of Sattva (harmony); ज्ञानम् wisdom ; संजायते is born ; च and ; रजसः from the quality of Rajas (activity); एव indeed ; लोभः greed ; तमसः (even so) from the quality of Tamas (inertia); प्रमादमोहौ obstinate error and stupor ; भवतः arise ; च and ; अज्ञानम् ignorance ; एव also .

Wisdom follows from Sattva, and greed, undoubtedly, from Rajas; likewise obstinate error, stupor and also ignorance follow from Tamas. (17)

The use of the word 'Jñānam' (wisdom) in this verse is only symbolical; it should be regarded as inclusive of light, joy, peace and all other Sattvic qualities.

Similarly 'Lobha' (greed) should be taken to include activity, attachment, desire, undertaking of actions with an

interested motive and all other Rajasic impulses.

The use of the particle 'Eva' is intended to show that Tamoguṇa not only breeds error, stupor and ignorance but also induces sleep, sloth, opacity, inactivity and all other Tamasic propensities.

Mentioning thus the effects of the three Guṇas, viz., wisdom etc., the Lord now describes the different destinies awaiting those who are established in the

three Guṇas, in order that one may be established in Sattvagūṇa and discard both Rajas and Tamas.

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।

जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥ १८ ॥

सत्त्वस्थाः those abiding in Sattva; ऊर्ध्वम् upwards; गच्छन्ति wend their way; राजसाः those of a Rajasic nature; मध्ये in the middle; तिष्ठन्ति stay; जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्थाः those enveloped in the effects of Tamogūṇa; तामसाः men of a Tamasic temperament; अधः गच्छन्ति sink down.

Those who abide in the quality of Sattva wend their way upwards; while those of a Rajasic disposition stay in the middle. And those of a Tamasic temperament, enveloped as they are in the effects of Tamogūṇa, sink down.* (18)

The indeclinable 'Urdhwam' in this verse covers all the regions higher than the earth, which have been referred to in verse 14 above as the 'faultless worlds gained by men of noble deeds', and in VI.41 as 'the worlds attained by men of meritorious deeds alone'. Attainment, after death, of these regions by men of a Sattvic nature is what is meant by their 'rising to the higher regions'.

Instead of migrating after death to any other region, men of a Rajasic disposition are reborn in this mortal world as human beings. This is what is meant by their 'staying in the middle'.

'Jaghanya' means low or reproachable. The word 'Jaghanyagūṇa', therefore, stands for Tamogūṇa. And its effects such as error, stupor, ignorance, obtuseness, inactivity and sleep etc. are what are referred to here as its Vṛttis. He who remains steeped in these is said to abide in them. Such a man is spoken of as having a Tamasic disposition. On leaving their human body these Tamasic men are reborn in lower species such as insects, moths, beasts, birds and trees etc., or undergo terrible

suffering in the form of tortures in the infernal regions known by the names of Raurava, Kumbhipāka and so on. This is what is meant by their sinking down.

Here it may be contended that verses 14 and 15 above state similar things about those who die during the ascendancy of the three Guṇas. This exposes the Lord to the charge of tautology. On closer examination, however, it will be found that there is no repetition here. Thus it will be seen that the words 'Yadā' and 'Tadā', which are adverbs of time, occur in verse 14. This shows that though a man may be naturally established in any other Guṇa, his destiny after death is determined by the Guṇa which preponderates in him at the time of death; this is what is sought to be conveyed in those verses. The present verse, however, describes the different destinies awaiting those who are naturally and permanently established in Sattva and other qualities. Hence there is no tautology here.

A reference to verse 15 above will show that it declared birth in the species of stupid creatures as the only

* Verse 10 of Chapter XXXIX of the *Aśwamedha-Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* is similarly worded.

destiny awaiting those who die during the sway of Tamoguna. In the present verse, however, the indeclinable 'Adhaḥ' has been interpreted to include condemnation to hell as well. The reason is not far to seek. It will be seen that verse 15 describes the lot of those men of a Sattvic or Rajasic temperament who depart from this world when the element of Tamas is predominant in them. That is why it uses the word 'Mūḍhayoniṣu Jāyate' rather than 'Adhaḥ Gatchhanti'; for it is contact with Tamoguna which brings about their birth in such species, as we hear of the royal sage Bharata being reborn as a deer even though he was established in Sattvaguna. But men of a Tamasic disposition, who are ever enveloped in the effects of Tamoguna, are liable even to be condemned to hell. In XVI. 20 the Lord explicitly says that being cast into demoniacal wombs, such men of a Tamasic disposition sink into still lower depths.

In XIII. 21 contact with the Guṇas was declared to be solely responsible for one's birth in good and evil wombs; accordingly, verses 5 to 18 of the present chapter described at length the essential character of the three Guṇas and the final destiny etc. of those who are bound by the evolutes of these Guṇas. The above discussion is intended to teach us that man should, first of all, establish himself in Sattvaguna, rejecting Tamas and Rajas, and should thereafter discard the Sattvaguna and rise above the Guṇas. The next two verses, therefore, discuss the means of rising above the three Guṇas as well as its reward.

नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति ।

गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेत्ति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ॥ १९ ॥

यदा when; द्रष्टा the seer; गुणेभ्यः अन्यम् anything else than the (three) Guṇas; कर्तारम् (as) the doer; न not; अनुपश्यति sees; च and; गुणेभ्यः परम् Me (the supreme Spirit, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified) standing entirely beyond the three Guṇas; वेत्ति knows (in reality); सः (at that time) he; मद्भावं My being; अधिगच्छति enters into.

When the seer perceives no agent other than the three Guṇas, and realizes Me, the supreme Spirit standing entirely beyond these Guṇas, he enters into My Being. (19)

The use of the indeclinable 'Yadā', which is an adverb of time, as well as of the word 'Draṣṭā', in this verse, is intended to convey that it describes an extraordinary state of mind. The intention is to show that man in his ordinary mood looks upon himself as an embodied being and is ever conscious of his being both a doer and experiencer,—he never regards himself as a disinterested observer having no connection with his actions and their consequences. The present verse however, refers to the time when, gaining wisdom through scriptures as well as the teachings of the preceptor, man begins to conceive himself as a spectator.

At the time when the senses, mind and the vital airs etc. are carrying on all their normal functions in the shape of hearing, seeing, eating and drinking, reflection and cogitation, sleeping, sitting and

so on, such a man constantly visualizes himself as established in identity with the formless and attributeless Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, and feels that it is the senses, mind, intellect and the vital airs etc. (which are evolutes of the three Guṇas) that are acting on their objects, which are evolutes of the same Guṇas (V. 8, 9), or in other words, that it is the Guṇas that react on the Guṇas (III. 28) and that he himself has no connection whatsoever with them. This is what is meant by perceiving no agent other than the Guṇas.

That which lies wholly beyond the three Guṇas is the integral Brahma or

supreme Spirit, which is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. He who recognizes God as absolutely unconnected with the Guṇas and views his identity with that formless and attributeless Brahma, who perceives no entity other than the aforesaid Brahma, that is to say, perceives God and God alone everywhere and at all times, is said to know Him in reality.

What follows this knowledge is the direct realization of Brahma as one with himself. This realization constitutes what has been referred to here as entering into the being of God.

गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन् देही देहसमुद्भवान् ।

जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैर्विमुक्तोऽमृतमश्नुते ॥ २० ॥

देही (this) soul; देहसमुद्भवान् causing the body; एतान् these; त्रीन् गुणान् the three Guṇas; अतीत्य transcending; जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैः from birth, death, old age and all kinds of sorrow; विमुक्तः freed; अमृतम् supreme bliss; अश्नुते attains.

Having transcended the aforesaid three Guṇas, which have caused the body, and freed from birth, death, old age and all kinds of sorrow, this soul attains supreme bliss.

(20)

The use of the word 'Dehī' is intended to convey that the same soul who once regarded himself as dwelling in a body attains Brahma or God when he transcends the three Guṇas.

The use of the demonstrative adjective 'Ētān' with 'Guṇān' is intended to show that the verse speaks of transcending the same Guṇas whose character has been discussed in this chapter, and which tie down the soul to the body. The compound adjective 'Dehasamudbhavān' shows that this physical body, which is a conglomeration of the following twenty-three categories, viz., the intellect, ego, mind, the five senses of perception, the five organs of action, the five gross elements and the five objects of senses, is nothing but an evolute of the three Guṇas born of Prakṛti; therefore, to regard it as one's own is to

get attached to the three Guṇas. Even so the numeral adjective 'Trīn' emphasizes that the Guṇas are three in number, and that liberation is attained only when one has transcended them all. Having transcended Rajas and Tamas, if a man remains tied to Sattvaguna, even that may stand in the way of his liberation and cause his rebirth. Therefore, Sattvaguna too must be transcended. The Self or the Spirit is really free from all attachment, it is altogether unconnected with the Guṇas; and yet due to ignorance, that has existed from time without beginning, the Jīva feels that he has been connected with the Guṇas. To sever this connection with the help of wisdom, and to realize oneself as identical with the formless and attributeless Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, and

as altogether unconnected with the Guṇas is what is meant by transcending the three Guṇas.

Birth and death, as well as the states of infancy, youth and senility are states of the body; even so all forms of suffering, such as mental agony and bodily ailment etc., affect the body alone, which is a conglomeration of mind, senses and the vital airs etc. Therefore, those who have no real connection whatever with the body are, really speaking, ever unaffected by changes in the body in the

form of birth, death and old age etc., even though they remain in the body in the eyes of the world. Therefore, severing all connection with the body through the realization of Truth is what is meant by complete immunity from birth, death, old age and sorrow. What follows next, viz., the direct realization of the immortal Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, as one's own self, which has been spoken of in verse 19 above as 'entering into the being of God'—this is what constitutes the attainment of supreme bliss.

Hearing the esoteric truth that having transcended the three Guṇas man attains supreme bliss during his very life-time, Arjuna puts the following question to the Lord, desiring to know the characteristics and conduct of one who has transcended the three Guṇas, as well as the means of rising above the Guṇas.

अर्जुन उवाच

कैलिङ्गैस्त्रिन् गुणानेतानतीतो भवति प्रभो ।

किमाचारः कथं चैतांस्त्रिन् गुणानतिवर्तते ॥ २१ ॥

एतान् these; त्रीन् three; गुणान् Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti; अतीतः he who has transcended; कैः लिङ्गैः (distinguished) by what marks; भवति is; किमाचारः (and) of what conduct; च and; प्रभो O Lord; कथम् how, by what means; एतान् these; त्रीन् three; गुणान् Guṇas; अतिवर्तते does he transcend.

Arjuna said: What are the marks of him who has risen above the three Guṇas, and what his conduct? And how, Lord, does he rise above the three Guṇas ? (21)

The repeated use of the adjectives 'Etān' and 'Trīn' with the word 'Guṇān' in these verses is intended to convey that the question of Arjuna relates to those very Guṇas which have been discussed at length in the present chapter.

The first question relates to the marks that have been recognized in the scriptures as distinguishing those who have transcended the three Guṇas—marks which constitute the very nature of those who have risen above the Guṇas and serve as a model for the practicers to follow.

By his second question, which relates to the conduct of him who has risen above the Guṇas, Arjuna seeks to know how he behaves with those who come in contact with him, how he lives and carries on his day-to-day activities.

By addressing the Lord as 'Prabho' Arjuna hints that He was the supreme Ruler, Creator, Destroyer, and the almighty Lord of the whole universe, so that He alone was capable of throwing full light on the subject; and that was what prompted Arjuna to put the aforesaid

questions to Him.

The last question relates to the means of rising above the three Guṇas. That is to say, Arjuna wanted to know

whether there was any way, easier than what had been stated in verse 19 above, by following which man could speedily transcend the three Guṇas without much exertion.

With reference to the above questionnaire of Arjuna, the Lord proceeds to answer in the next four verses the first two questions relating to the 'marks' and 'conduct' of him who has risen above the Guṇas.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।

न द्वेष्टि संप्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति ॥ २२ ॥

पाण्डव O son of Pāṇḍu, Arjuna; प्रकाशम् light (which is born of Sattva); च and; प्रवृत्तिम् activity (which is born of Rajas); च and; मोहम् stupor (which is born of Tamas); एव also; न neither; संप्रवृत्तानि (when) prevalent; द्वेष्टि (he who) hates; च and; न nor; निवृत्तानि having ceased; काङ्क्षति longs for.

Śrī Bhagavān said: Arjuna, he who hates not light (which is born of Sattva) and activity (which is born of Rajas) and even stupor (which is born of Tamas), when prevalent, nor longs for them when they have ceased, (22)

When sloth and dullness have disappeared from the body, senses and mind, and a feeling of lightness, purity and liveliness pervades them, such a feeling is known by the name of 'Prakāśa' or light. Wisdom, tranquillity and joy are ever present in the man who has risen above the Guṇas. They are never absent in him. That is why the verse speaks of 'light' alone among the effects of Sattvaguna. That is to say, if light automatically appears in his body, senses and mind, he feels no aversion for it; nor does he long for its return when it has disappeared. Its appearance and disappearance make no difference to him.

The urge to undertake activities of various kinds is called 'Pravṛtti'. The other effects of Rajoguna, such as lust, greed, craving and attachment etc. are no longer present in him who has transcended the Guṇas. Of course, activity of some

sort is undertaken by the body and senses of even such a man, but the same is covered by the term 'Pravṛtti'. That is why, of all the effects of Rajoguna, the verse emphasizes the absence of attachment and aversion for 'Pravṛtti' or activity alone. That is to say, when there is an urge in the mind of him who has risen above the Guṇas to undertake any action, or when the same is actually undertaken by his body, he feels no aversion for the same; and when this is not the case, he does not hanker for it either. The appearance and disappearance of an urge or activity make no difference to him.

'Moha' is that stupefying tendency of the mind, which induces drowsiness, dream and deep slumber etc. and robs the body, senses and mind of light, born of Sattvaguna. The other effects of Tamoguna, such as ignorance etc., cease to exist in him who has transcended the Guṇas; for

ignorance cannot even enter the outskirts of wisdom and, in the absence of any doer, erring is out of question. Therefore, of all the effects of Tamoguna, the verse emphasizes the absence of attachment and aversion for 'Moha' or stupor alone. That is to say, when the body of the man who has risen above the three

Gunas is swayed by effects of Tamoguna in the shape of drowsiness, dream or deep slumber, he feels no aversion for the same; and when they relax their hold on them, he does not long for their return. Their appearance and disappearance make no difference to him.

उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचाल्यते ।

गुणा वर्तन्ते इत्येव योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते ॥ २३ ॥

यः who; उदासीनवत् like a witness; आसीनः sitting; गुणैः by the Gunas or modes of Prakṛti; न विचाल्यते is not disturbed; गुणाः एव the Gunas alone; वर्तन्ते move (among the Gunas); इति so (knowing); यः who; अवतिष्ठति remains established in identity with God (who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified); न इङ्गते (and) never falls off (from that state).

He who, sitting like a witness, is not disturbed by the Gunas, and who, knowing that the Gunas alone move among the Gunas, remains established in identity with God, and never falls off from that state, (23)

'Udāsīna' is he who maintains an attitude of indifference towards incidents and things with which he has absolutely no connection whatsoever. Since the man who has risen above the three Gunas ceases to have any connection whatsoever with those Gunas and their evolutes, viz., the body, senses and mind and all other objects and events, he stands like a witness as it were. In reality, however, this state of indifference too is only accidental to him; he is unconnected even with that. This is what is meant by speaking of him as sitting like a witness.

Souls who are connected with the Gunas are driven by them, even against their will, to activities of various kinds and forced to reap their fruit; they disturb their peace of mind by bringing them joy and sorrow and cause them to migrate from one species of life to another. They, however, cease to have any influence on him who has no connection with them. He remains ever unchanged and unaffected in the midst of changes undergone by the body,

senses and mind, which are the products of these Gunas, and in spite of his contact with, and separation from, various objects of the world. This is what is meant by his remaining undisturbed by the Gunas.

The words 'Guṇāḥ vartante iti eva' in the present verse echo the same idea as has been brought out in the latter half of III. 28. The intention is to show that all organs, such as the senses, mind, intellect and vital airs etc., and all objects of senses, such as sound etc., are extensions of the Gunas. Therefore, the moving of the senses, mind and intellect, etc. among their respective objects is nothing but the moving of the Gunas among the Gunas. The Self or Spirit has nothing to do with them. It is eternal, conscious, wholly unattached, ever unchanging and the same as Truth, Consciousness and Bliss.

'Na ingate' means 'never moves'. The idea is that not only the Gunas are incapable of shaking him who has

transcended them; but he for his own Spirit, who is Truth, Consciousness and part never loses his balance of mind. For Bliss solidified, it no longer retains its once the Jiva is established in identity separate identity. Who is, then, to lose with the integral Brahma or supreme his balance and how?

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।

तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥ २४ ॥

स्वस्थः (ever) established in the Self; समदुःखसुखः treating woe and joy alike; समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः regarding a clod of earth, a stone and a piece of gold as equal in value; धीरः wise; तुल्यप्रियाप्रियः receiving the agreeable and the disagreeable in the same spirit; तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः viewing censure and praise alike.

He who is ever established in the Self, takes woe and joy alike, regards a clod of earth, a stone and a piece of gold as equal in value, is possessed of wisdom, receives the pleasant as well as the unpleasant in the same spirit, and views censure and praise alike, (24)

'Swastha' is he who is established in his real self. The use of this word is intended to convey that he alone who is established in the Self can remain balanced in joy and sorrow. The idea is that the common run of men are, as a rule, centred in one or other of the three bodies—physical, astral and causal—all of which are evolved from 'Prakṛti' or Matter; therefore, they are centred in 'Prakṛti' (Prakṛtistha), and not in the Self. And such men only move among the Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti (XIII. 21), hence they cannot take joy and sorrow alike. The man who has transcended the Guṇas ceases to have any connection whatsoever with Prakṛti and its evolutes; that is why he is 'Swastha'—established in his own Self, who is the same as Truth, Consciousness and Bliss. Therefore, even though joys and sorrows continue to appear and disappear in the body, senses and mind of the man who has risen above the Guṇas and has accordingly ceased to have any connection with them, he does not identify himself with those joys and sorrows; he remains

ever balanced. This is how he takes joy and sorrow alike.

A lump made out of the mixture of clay and cow dung used in plastering mud hovels, as well as the refuse of iron are known by the name of 'Loṣṭa'. Holding such a lump as well as a stone and a piece of gold as neither acceptable nor worth rejecting is what is meant by regarding them as equal in value. The statement that a 'Gupātita' makes no distinction between them is intended to show that whatever objects there are in the world—which people regard as either superb, second-rate or of a mean order—are equal in his eyes; for he views all objects as illusory like water in a mirage, he has no bias for or against any particular object.

A man of wisdom, i.e., who is stable of mind, is called 'Dhīra'. He who has transcended the Guṇas never loses his balance of mind even in the face of the greatest joy and sorrow (VI. 21, 22). That is why his reason ever remains steadfast.

That which is agreeable to the body, senses, mind and intellect, and which strengthens, helps and soothes them is said to be 'pleasant' in the eyes of the world; while that which is disagreeable and hostile to them, which wears them away and mortifies them, is considered 'unpleasant' from the worldly point of view. In spite of the contact of the body, senses and mind with multifarious objects and beings of both these types, he who has no bias for or against any of those objects is said to 'receive the agreeable and the disagreeable in the same spirit'.

Inasmuch as the *Guṇātīta* ceases to have any connection with the body, senses and mind, he has no bias for or against any object which comes in contact with his body etc. The idea is that to the common run of men, contact with what is agreeable and the removal of that which is disagreeable are a source

of attraction and joy; whereas contact with what is disagreeable and the loss of that which is agreeable excite a feeling of aversion and sorrow. Such is, however, not the case with him who has risen above the *Guṇas*; he is ever completely beyond the feelings of attraction and aversion, joy and grief.

'*Nindā*' or censure consists in exposing the real or imaginary faults of another, while '*Stuti*' or praise consists in expatiating on his virtues. Both these are related mainly to the 'name' of an individual, and partly to his body. Since the *Guṇātīta* ceases to have any connection whatsoever with the 'body' and its 'name', 'censure' or 'praise' causes him neither grief nor delight; the calumniator does not excite his wrath, nor does the panegyrist earn his pleasure. He remains balanced under all circumstances. This is how he views censure and praise alike.

मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥ २५ ॥

मानापमानयोः to honour and ignominy; तुल्यः (who is) indifferent; मित्रारिपक्षयोः to the cause of a friend as well as to that of an enemy; तुल्यः alike; सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी (and) has renounced the sense of doership in all undertakings; सः he; गुणातीतः one who has risen above the three *Guṇas*; उच्यते is spoken of (as).

He who is indifferent to honour and ignominy, is alike to the cause of a friend as well as to that of an enemy, and has renounced the sense of doership in all undertakings, is said to have risen above the three *Guṇas*. (25)

Honour and ignominy are mainly related to the body. Therefore, those worldly-minded people who look upon the body as their self have a liking for honour, and an aversion for ignominy. Consequently, honour brings them delight, while dishonour fills them with grief; and they love him who honours them and are even inimically disposed towards him who insults them. The *Guṇātīta*, however, inasmuch as he ceases to have any

connection with the body, neither feels delighted when the latter is honoured, nor is he filled with grief when it is treated with ignominy. In his eyes, the object of honour and dishonour, the agent who is responsible for such treatment, as well as the acts constituting these—everything is illusory and analogous to a dream; that is why honour and ignominy do not arouse in him the feelings of attraction and aversion or delight

and grief. That is how he maintains an attitude of indifference to honour and ignominy both.

Even though the Guṇātita entertains no feeling of friendship or enmity towards any creature for his own part, and hence there is no friend or foe in his eyes, yet people find their own sentiment of friendship or enmity reflected in him. It is in this sense that the Lord speaks of him as alike to the cause of a friend and to that of an enemy. That is to say, whereas ordinary men of the world identify themselves with, and extend their love to, those who are on friendly terms with them, as well as to their relatives and well-wishers, and help them even by sacrificing their own interests, while they hate those who are inimically disposed towards them, as well as their relatives and well-wishers, wish harm to them and employ their energy in actually harming them, a Guṇātita does not. He maintains an attitude of impartiality towards both the parties, and cherishing no love or hatred for any, is habitually engaged in doing good to all alike. He harms none, has no bias for or against anyone. This is how he is alike to the cause of a friend as well as to that of an enemy.

The noun 'Ārambha' forming part of the compound word 'Sarvārambhaparitāgi' in this verse denotes any action whatsoever. The use of this compound adjective with reference to a Guṇātita is, therefore, intended to convey that he does not claim the doership in respect of any actions, conforming to the scriptural injunctions, habitually performed by his body, senses, mind and intellect by force of his Prārabdha or destiny in the interest of the world order, i. e., with the object of weaning the people from evil ways and reclaiming them to the path of rectitude.

The concluding words of this verse, viz., 'Guṇātitaḥ sa uchyate'—'he is said to have risen above the three Guṇas'—sum up the Lord's reply to two of Arjuna's three questions embodied in verse 21 above. That is to say, a Guṇātita is he who is endowed with all the virtues described in verses 22, 23, 24 and 25. It is these which constitute his distinguishing marks and these again which typify his conduct and behaviour. Therefore, so long as one's heart shows the least trace of partiality and prejudice, a sense of disparity, joy and grief, ignorance and egotism, one should know that he has not yet attained the state of a Guṇātita.

Replying in the above words to the first two questions of Arjuna, the Lord now deals with his third question concerning the means of rising above the Guṇas. The Lord had already stated in verse 19 above that the means of attaining that state is to remain constantly established in the formless and attributeless Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, realizing himself to be a non-doer. And besides this a sustained effort to imbibe the qualities and conduct of a Guṇātita described in the above four verses, holding them as the ideal worth approaching, is also recognized as a means of reaching that state. Nevertheless, since Arjuna desired to know whether there was any easier way other than those mentioned above, the Lord suggests such a way to Arjuna as desired by him,

मां च योऽन्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ।

स गुणान् समतीत्यैतान् ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥ २६ ॥

यः who; अन्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन through the Yoga of exclusive devotion; माम् Me; सेवते constantly worships; सः he; च too; एतान् गुणान् these (three)

Guṇas; समतीय fully transcending; ब्रह्मभूयाय for attaining Brahma; कल्पते becomes eligible.

He too who constantly worships Me through the Yoga of exclusive devotion,—transcending these three Guṇas, he becomes eligible for attaining Brahma. (26)

The noun 'Bhaktiyogena', qualified by the adjective 'Avyabhichāreṇa', denotes that undivided love for God which has no selfish motive behind it and presupposes extreme reverence, and which follows the belief that He alone is the highest object of worship and worth approaching for protection, that He is the supreme goal and the ultimate resort, that He is our Lord, father and mother, brother and kinsman, our greatest benefactor, and what not, and that we have none else than Him to call our own. In other words, 'Avyabhichāra Bhaktiyoga' is that exclusive love which is absolutely untainted by self-interest, egotism and infidelity, and ever complete in all respects, which is unshakeable, and altogether undivided, and which may make it unbearable for us to forget the Lord even for a moment.

And he who is constantly engaged in hearing of, singing and dwelling on the Lord's virtues, glory and pastimes, reciting and muttering His names, contemplating on His being and other such practices, who looks upon the mind, intellect, body and other organs and everything else as belonging to God, and who continues to perform all actions in a disinterested way and for His sake in the manner enjoined by Him and as an act of service to Him,

regarding himself as a mere tool in His hands, is said to worship Him through the Yoga of exclusive devotion.

The personal pronoun 'Mām' in this verse refers to God with attributes, who is all-powerful, all-pervading, all-sustaining and supremely merciful, the inner Ruler of all, the creator and destroyer of the entire universe, the disinterested friend of all, the supreme lover.

The use of the demonstrative adjective 'Etān' with the substantive 'Guṇān' is intended to convey that the latter stands for the three modes of Prakṛti,—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas,—which form the subject of discussion in the present chapter; and he who ceases to have any connection whatsoever with the aforesaid Guṇas and their evolutes in the form of the body, senses, mind, intellect and all mundane objects, is said to have transcended these Guṇas.

The moment man succeeds in transcending the Guṇas, as stated above, he not only becomes eligible for attaining as his very self the formless and attributeless Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, and after attaining whom nothing remains to be attained, but actually attains Him immediately after. This is what is meant by the words 'Brahmabhūyāya Kalpate'.

The above verse holds out the attainment of the formless and attributeless Brahma as the reward of worshipping God with attributes; verse 19 says that a Guṇātīta enters into the being of God; whereas verse 20 declares the attainment of supreme Bliss (Amṛta) as the fruit of rising above the three Guṇas. Therefore, in order to remove from the mind of Arjuna any doubt regarding the disparity of these rewards, the Lord establishes their identity in the concluding verse of this chapter.

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहममृतस्याव्ययस्य च ।

शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च ॥ २७ ॥

हि because; अव्ययस्य ब्रह्मणः of the (aforesaid) imperishable (supreme)
Brahma; च and; अमृतस्य of immortality; च and; शाश्वतस्य धर्मस्य of the eternal
virtue; च and (again); ऐकान्तिकस्य सुखस्य of unending (immutable) joy;
प्रतिष्ठा the ground; अहम् I (am).

For, I am the ground of the imperishable Brahma, of immortality,
of the eternal virtue and of unending immutable bliss. (27)

The use of the adjective 'Avyayasya' with the substantive 'Brahmanah' shows that the latter stands here for the formless and attributeless supreme Spirit, and not for Prakṛti. And the intention of the Lord in declaring Himself as the ground of that imperishable Brahma is to convey that the latter is not different from Him, who is the same as God possessed of attributes, and that He is not different from Brahma. In reality, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Brahma are not two different entities, but represent one and the same Reality. Therefore, the attainment of Brahma, referred to in the preceding verse, is the same as the realization of Śrī Kṛṣṇa or God with attributes. For, it is the one supreme Brahma or God who is said to be endowed with different forms in order that He may be worshipped by men of varying capacities. Of these, the absolute or attributeless aspect, which transcends Māyā and is inconceivable and beyond the reach of mind and speech, is one and only one; while God with attributes is both with and without form. That which pervades the entire universe, which is all-supporting, which sustains and nourishes all, is the qualified unmanifest or formless aspect. Śrī Śiva, Śrī Viṣṇu, Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and others are the manifest forms of God, while this entire universe is His cosmic Body.

The word 'Amṛtasya' also refers to Brahma, realizing whom man becomes

immortal, that is, secures lasting immunity from transmigration in the form of birth and death. By referring to Himself as the ground of immortality, the Lord shows that He is no other than that 'immortality', so that the attainment of 'immortality' referred to in verse 20 of this chapter and verse 12 of Chapter XIII is the same as His own realization.

The substantive 'Dharmasya' qualified by the adjective 'Śāśvatasya' denotes that eternal virtue which has been spoken of in the concluding verse of Chapter XII as 'Dharmyāmṛta' or the nectar of pious wisdom, and referred to in the present chapter as the marks of him who has transcended the three Guṇas. By declaring Himself as the ground of such virtue, the Lord intends to convey that, being conducive to His realization, it constitutes His own being; for he who practises it attains no other reward than Himself.

The noun 'Sukhasya', qualified by the adjective 'Aikāntikasya' stands for that everlasting supreme Bliss which has been referred to in verse 21 of Chapter V as 'undiminished joy', as 'unending bliss' in verse 21 of Chapter VI and as 'everlasting joy' in verse 28 of the same chapter. By speaking of Himself as the ground of that Bliss, the Lord shows that such everlasting supreme Bliss is the same as Himself, and nothing else than Him; hence the attainment of that Bliss is the same as His own realization.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे गुणत्रयविभागयोगो
नाम चतुर्दशोऽध्यायः ॥ १४ ॥

*Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the
science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the
dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna,
ends the fourteenth chapter entitled
"The Yoga of Division of
the three Guṇas."*

Chapter XV

The present chapter is devoted to a discussion of the virtues, glory and essential character of the Supreme Person or God with attributes, who is the almighty lord, creator, and destroyer of the entire universe, the inner ruler and disinterested friend of all, all-pervading, supremely merciful, all-supporting and worth approaching for shelter. Speaking of the Kṣara Puruṣa (Kṣetra), the Akṣara Puruṣa (Kṣetrajña) and the Supreme Person (God), it explains at length how God is superior to both 'Kṣara' and 'Akṣara', why He is called the 'Supreme Person', what is the value of knowing Him as the supreme Person and how can He be realized. That is why the chapter has been designated as "The Yoga of the Supreme Person".

Verses 1 and 2 of this chapter metaphorically refer to the universe in terms of a peepul tree. Declaring in the third that the beginning or end or even stability of this tree of universe are not actually perceived, the Lord exhorts us to fell it with the formidable axe of dispassion; while in the fourth He advises us to seek refuge in God, the Primeval Person, in order to realize Him in the form of the supreme State. Describing in verse 5 the marks of those who reach that supreme State, the Lord declares in the sixth that the supreme State referred to above is supremely effulgent and that there is no return from it. Thereafter, verses 7 to 11 discuss, among other things, the nature of the Jīva or embodied soul, how it migrates from one body to another along with the mind and senses and how, abiding in the body, it enjoys worldly pleasures through them, and declare in the end that the man of wisdom alone can know the Jīvātmā in all his states and that a man possessing an impure heart is incapable of knowing it under any circumstance. Declaring in the twelfth that the light existing in the Sun, who illumines the whole universe, as well as in the moon etc. is His own effulgence, in the thirteenth and the fourteenth He speaks of Himself as having entered the earth and thereby sustaining all beings, as nourishing all in the form of the moon, and as digesting all food in the form of the gastric fire. In the fifteenth He speaks of Himself as indwelling the hearts of all, as the source of memory, etc. of all beings, as that which ought to be known through the Vedas, and as the knower of the Vedas and the originator of Vedānta. Declaring in the sixteenth that all beings are referred to as Kṣara, and that the immutable Self is spoken of as Akṣara, He speaks in the seventeenth of the imperishable, all-pervading and all-sustaining God as the Supreme Person, and as distinct from both. Pointing out in the eighteenth the reason why the Lord is known as the

Supreme Person, He concludes the chapter by glorifying in the nineteenth the man who knows Him as the Supreme Person and extolling in the twentieth the knowledge of this most esoteric teaching.

Having discussed at length in verses 5 to 18 of Chapter XIV the essential character of the three Guṇas, their evolutions as well as their binding nature, the destinies of a higher, lower and intermediate order awaiting those who are bound by these Guṇas and so on, the Lord pointed out in the nineteenth and the twentieth the means as well as the reward of transcending these Guṇas. Thereafter in response to Arjuna's query, He described in verses 22 to 25 the marks and conduct of him who has risen above the Guṇas, and proclaimed in verse 26 that the Yoga of exclusive devotion to God with attributes was an easier way of transcending the three Guṇas, and becoming eligible for attaining Brahma. Therefore, with the object of awakening undivided love for God, which has been referred to in Chapter XIV as the Yoga of exclusive devotion to Him, the Lord now introduces Chapter XV in order to discuss the virtues, glory and essential character of the Supreme Person or God with attributes as well as the principal means of transcending the Guṇas, viz., dispassion and self-surrender to Him. In order, first of all, to arouse dispassion towards the world, the Lord speaks of the world in the following three verses in the terms of a peepul tree and exhorts us to cut it down with the axe of dispassion.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखमश्वत्थं प्रादुरव्ययम् ।

छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥ १ ॥

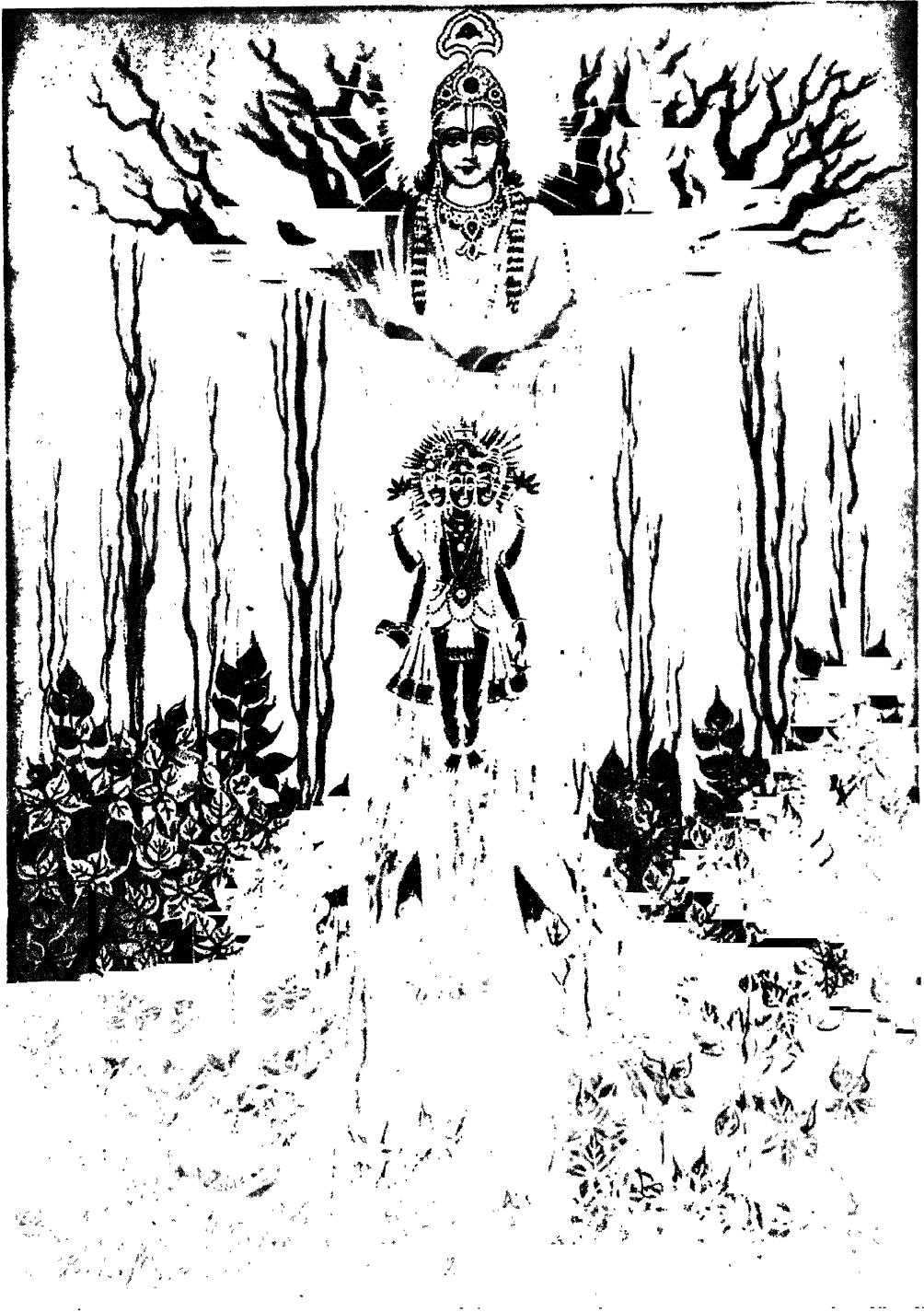
ऊर्ध्वमूलम् having its roots in God (the Primeval Person); अधःशाखम् whose stem is represented by Brahmā (the Creator); अश्वत्थम् the peepul tree (in the form of this creation); अव्ययम् (as) imperishable; प्रादुः they declare; छन्दांसि (and) Vedas; यस्य of which; पर्णानि (are declared to be) the leaves; तम् that (tree in the form of creation); यः who; वेद knows (in reality along with its root); सः he; वेदवित् (is) the knower of (the intention of) the Vedas.

Śrī Bhagavān said: He who knows the peepul tree (in the form of creation), which is said to be imperishable with its roots in the Primeval Being (God), whose stem is represented by Brahmā (the Creator), and whose leaves are the Vedas, is a knower of (the intention of) the Vedas. (1)

The tree in the form of this creation in verse 4 as well as in several other has sprung and grown from the Primeval verses. That Primeval Being or God is Being, Nārāyaṇa; this has been stated eternal and infinite, as well as the

Kalyana-Kalpataru

The Tree of Creation



“He who knows the peepul tree (in the form of creation), which is said to be imperishable with its roots in the primeval Being (God), whose stem is represented by Brahmā (the Creator), and whose leaves are the Vedas, is a knower of (the intention of) the Vedas.” (XV.1)

foundation of all, and resides in the form of God with attributes in His eternal Abode situated above all other regions; therefore, He is termed as 'Ūrdhva'. The tree in the form of this cosmos has emanated from that almighty God, the Lord of Māyā; hence it is spoken of as 'Ūrdhva-Mūla' or having its root above. While other ordinary trees have their roots extending downwards below the earth's surface, this tree of creation has its root extending upwards; that is a most extraordinary phenomenon.

During the evolution of this tree of creation, Brahmā or the Creator appears first of all; hence it is Brahmā who represents its stem. The abode of Brahmā is situated in a lower plane as compared to the eternal Abode of the Primeval Being, Nārāyaṇa, and his rank too is lower than that of the Lord. It is from the Primeval Being, Nārāyaṇa, that Brahmā takes His descent and it is He who controls him. Hence this tree of creation has been spoken of as having its stem lower than its root.

Being subject to change, this tree of creation is perishable, transient and momentary in character; yet it has existed from time without beginning and one never finds its continuity broken; hence it is called 'Avyaya' or imperishable. For in the form of God Almighty its root is eternal and imperishable. But really speaking, this tree of creation is not imperishable. Had it been so, it

would not have been stated in verse 3 below that it does not turn out what it is represented to be, nor would there be any sense in exhorting anyone to fell it with the formidable axe of dispassion.

Leaves grow out of the stem of a tree and contribute to the protection and growth of the tree. The Vedas have flowed from Brahmā, who represents the stem of this tree of creation; and it is acts enjoined by the Vedas that are conducive to the growth and protection of the world. Hence the Vedas have been represented as the leaves of this tree.

Brought forth by Māyā or the illusory power of God Almighty, this creation is liable to appear and disappear like a tree, and is momentary in character; therefore, refusing to be trapped by its glamour, one should take refuge in God, who is the Lord of Māyā, and has created this universe. Knowing this truth, and cultivating dispassion and indifference towards the world he who surrenders himself to God, he alone is a real knower of the Vedas; for it is God alone who has been declared in verse 15 below as worth knowing through all the Vedas. He who comes to know this character of the tree of creation develops indifference towards it and takes refuge in God; and it is self-surrender to God that constitutes the main theme of the Vedas. This is what is meant by the statement that he who knows the tree of creation is the knower of Vedas.

अधश्चोर्ध्वं प्रसृतास्तस्य शाखा गुणप्रवृद्धा विषयप्रवालाः ।

अधश्च मूलान्यनुसंततानि कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके ॥ २ ॥

तस्य of the aforesaid tree of creation; गुणप्रवृद्धा: fed by (water in the form of) the three Guṇas; विषयप्रवालाः having sense-objects for their tender leaves; शाखाः branches (in the shape of the different orders of creation such as gods, human beings and sub-human creatures etc.); अधः downwards; च as well as; ऊर्ध्वम् upwards; प्रसृताः (are) extended; च and;

मनुष्यलोके in the human body; कर्मानुबन्धीनि binding (the soul) according to (its) actions; मूलानि roots (too); अधः in the lower regions; च as well as (in the higher regions); अनुसंततानि are spread everywhere.

Fed by the three Guṇas and having sense-objects for their tender leaves, the branches of the aforesaid tree (in the shape of the different orders of creation) extend both downwards and upwards; and its roots, which bind the soul according to its actions in the human body, are spread in all regions, higher as well as lower. (2)

It is attachment to the Guṇas that is responsible for one's birth in good and evil wombs (XIII. 21); and it is from the Guṇas, again, that all the worlds as well as the bodies of living beings are evolved: this is what is meant by speaking of the branches of the aforesaid tree as fed by the Guṇas. And it is in these branches in the form of the different species of living beings that all the five objects of senses, viz., sound, touch, colour, taste and smell appear; that is why these sense-objects have been compared to tender leaves.

All the divisions of this cosmos from Brahmāloka (the abode of Brahmā) down to the nethermost region known by the name of Pātāla, as well as the different orders of creation inhabiting them, constitute the numerous branches of this tree; and their spreading everywhere from the highest to the lowest region is what is meant by their extending both downwards and upwards.

The feelings of 'I' and 'mine' and the latent type of desires, which are all born of Avidyā or Nescience, represent the roots of this tree. They sway the hearts of all living beings who inhabit the various divisions of the universe from Brahmāloka down to the nethermost world, and are liable to appear and disappear; hence they have been spoken of as extending in all regions, higher as well as lower. And freedom of will is enjoyed by human beings alone and actions performed through the human body under the impulse of egotism, the feeling of meum and latent desires have been held to be the cause of bondage; that is why these roots bind the soul according to its actions in the human body. All other species are meant for experiencing pleasure and pain, they do not enjoy freedom of action; hence roots in the form of egotism, the sense of meum and latent desires, even though present in them, cannot bind the soul according to its actions in those orders of creation.

न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते नान्तो न चादिर्न च सम्प्रतिष्ठा ।

अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरूढमूलमसङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्त्वा ॥ ३ ॥

अस्य of this tree of creation; रूपम् character; तथा of the kind it has been represented to be; इह here (on mature thought); न उपलभ्यते is not found; न (for) neither; आदिः (there is) beginning; च न nor; अन्तः end; च न nor again; सम्प्रतिष्ठा (there is) stability; एनम् this; सुविरूढमूलम् most firmly rooted; अश्वत्थम् peepul tree; दृढेन असङ्गशस्त्रेण with the formidable axe of dispassion; छित्त्वा felling;

The nature of this tree of creation does not on mature thought turn out what it is represented to be; for it has neither beginning nor end, nor even stability. Therefore, felling this Peepul tree, which is most firmly-rooted, with the formidable axe of dispassion, (3)

On mature thought as well as on the realization of Truth the nature of this tree of creation does not turn out what it has been represented to be in the Śāstras, what it actually appears and what we hear about it; for even in thoughtful moments we realize its perishable and momentary character, while with the realization of Truth it ceases once for all to have any connection with us. In the eyes of him who has realized the Truth, it gets extinct. That is why verse 16 speaks of it as the 'Kṣara' Puruṣa, or a perishable entity.

By speaking of the tree of creation as without beginning or end, and having no stability, the Lord intends to show its indescribable nature. The idea is that although this tree of creation is traditionally believed to have a beginning as well as an end, inasmuch as it is known to spring up at the beginning of a cosmic day and disappear at the end of it, one does not know when this serial process of its appearance and disappearance actually started and how long it will continue. Even during its actual existence it is in a state of constant flux; what it was a moment ago it ceases to be the very next moment. In this way, one does not discover the beginning or even the stability of this tree of creation.

The roots of this tree of creation in the form of the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' and the latent type of desires, which are all born of Nescience, having been

constantly nourished from time without beginning, have become extremely strong. Therefore, so long as the axe is not applied to them, the tree of creation cannot be destroyed. Even if we lop its trunk, that is to say, even if we sever all outward connection with the world, the tree of creation cannot be felled unless we give up the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' as well as our latent desires. It is in order to bring out this idea, as well as to show that it is a most uphill task to cut these roots, that the tree has been spoken of as very firmly-rooted. Realizing through one's critical judgment the perishable and momentary character of the entire universe, he who no longer finds any joy, agreeability or attraction in the various enjoyments of this world and the next,—such as wife and children, wealth and home, honour and fame, popular esteem and heavenly bliss etc.,—in other words, he who altogether ceases to have any attachment for them is said to have developed a strong dispassion; and it is this dispassion that has been referred to here under the name of Asanga-Śāstra. And he who gives up with the help of this dispassion all thought of this world, consisting of animate and inanimate creation,—in other words, he who develops indifference towards it, and further gives up the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' as well as his latent desires is said to have felled the aforesaid tree of mundane existence with the formidable axe of dispassion.

The Lord now tells us what further step should be taken after one has felled the tree of mundane existence with the axe of dispassion.

ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं यस्मिन् गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।

तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी ॥ ४ ॥

ततः after that; तत् that; पदम् supreme state, viz., God; परिमार्गितव्यम् should be diligently sought after; यस्मिन् to which; गतः having attained; नूनः न no more; निवर्तन्ति they return; च and; यतः from whom; पुराणी प्रवृत्तिः the flow of this beginningless creation; प्रसूता has progressed; तम् that; आद्यम् primeval; पुरुषम् Being (Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa); एव alone; प्रपद्ये I take refuge in.

Thereafter a man should diligently seek for that supreme state, viz., God, having attained to which they return no more to this world; and having fully resolved that he stands dedicated to that primeval Being (God Nārāyaṇa) Himself, from whom the flow of this beginningless creation has progressed, he should dwell and meditate on Him. (4)

The noun 'Padam' in this verse denotes that which has been spoken of as 'Ūrdhva' in the opening verse of this chapter, and as 'Mām' (Me) in verse 26 of Chapter XIV and 'Aham' in the very next verse, and which has been referred to at other places under various names, such as the supreme State, the immortal State, the supreme Goal and the supreme Abode. And striving again and again to realize through contemplation and meditation the essential character, virtues and glory of the almighty and all-sustaining God is what is meant by seeking after that supreme State. The idea is that developing complete indifference towards the world through dispassion coupled with critical sagacity, as advised in verse 3 above, one should strive to attain that supreme state or God by taking recourse to contemplation and meditation.

The qualifying clause 'attaining to which they return no more to this world' is intended to convey that the supreme state which we have been exhorted to seek after is no other than the Lord Himself. In other words, the noun 'Padam' in this verse refers to the same almighty, all-supporting and all-sustaining God or supreme Person, attaining to whom men know no return. Verse 21 of Chapter VIII also inculcates the same idea.

Self-surrender to that Primeval Being (God) from whom this beginningless cycle of creation has started its career and from whom this cosmic tree has spread out its branches, is the only way to transcend this mundane existence once for all and realize Him. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the latter half of this verse.

The substantive 'Puruṣam', qualified by the adjectives 'Tam' and 'Ādyam', signifies that very God or supreme Person who has already been referred to by the words 'Tat' and 'Padam' in the first half of this verse and whose Māyā-Śakti or illusive power has been declared as responsible for bringing forth and expanding this ancient cosmic tree. The use of the verb 'Prapadye' is intended to impress upon our mind that one should strive to realize that supreme State or God only by taking refuge in Him. The idea is that one should continue to strive for His realization in the aforesaid manner, taking care not to be tainted even by a tinge of pride and reposing full faith in God with a feeling of absolute and exclusive dependence on Him and relying on His strength alone.

The use of the particle 'Eva' is intended to impress on our mind that for God-Realization one should take refuge in Him and Him alone.

The Lord now points out the marks of those who succeed in realizing Him by taking refuge in the above manner in that Primal Being or God, who is the same as the supreme State.

निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः ।

द्वन्द्वैर्विमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसंज्ञैर्गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥ ५ ॥

निर्मानमोहाः free from pride and delusion; जितसङ्गदोषाः who have conquered the evil of attachment; अध्यात्मनित्याः who are in eternal union with God; विनिवृत्तकामाः whose cravings have altogether ceased; सुखदुःखसंज्ञैः द्वन्द्वैः from (all) pairs of opposites going by the names of joy and sorrow; विमुक्ताः completely immune; अमूढाः the wise; तत् that; अव्ययम् imperishable; पदम् (supreme) State; गच्छन्ति reach.

Those wise men who are free from pride and delusion, who have conquered the evil of attachment, who are in eternal union with God, whose cravings have altogether ceased and who are completely immune from all pairs of opposites going by the names of pleasure and pain, reach that supreme immortal state. (5)

The word 'Māna', forming part of the compound adjective 'Nirmānamohāḥ' in this verse, signifies honour, fame and prestige; while 'Moha' denotes indiscretion, error, delusion and other Tamasic propensities. Therefore, 'Nirmānamohāḥ' are those who do not entertain the least idea of their own superiority in point of birth, merits, wealth, power and learning etc., and who have risen above honour, fame and prestige, as well as above Tamasic propensities like indiscretion and delusion etc.

'Jitasangadoṣāḥ' are those who no longer entertain the least attachment for the enjoyments of this world and the next, whose mind remains unexcited even in the midst of worldly pleasures.

The word 'Adhyātma' forming part of the compound adjective 'Adhyātmanityāḥ' in this verse, stands for the essential character of God. Therefore, 'Adhyātmanityāḥ' are those who stand eternally united with God, who are never disunited

from Him even for a moment and whose mood is ever unshakeable.

The word 'Kāma', forming part of the compound adjective 'Vinivṛttakāmāḥ' covers all kinds of desires of various gradations, such as craving, thirst, want, latent desire and longing etc., all of which have delicate shades of meaning. Therefore, 'Vinivṛttakāmāḥ' are those who have no desire of any kind and in any of these forms lurking in their mind.

Pairs of opposites, such as heat and cold, agreeable and disagreeable, honour and ignominy, praise and censure etc., have been given the names of joy and sorrow inasmuch as they are conducive to joy and sorrow. He who transcends these, that is to say, he who is not in the least susceptible to morbid feelings such as attraction and aversion, joy and grief, etc. in the presence or absence of any of these contraries is said to be completely immune from pairs of opposites going by the names of joy and sorrow.

The word 'Amūḍhāh' refers to those illumined saints who are entirely free from delusion or ignorance. It is this word which stands in the relation of a substantive to all compound adjectives preceding it.

The supreme immortal state referred to in this verse is the same as the almighty and all-supporting God, whom we have been exhorted to seek after and dedicate ourselves to in verse 4 above.

This naturally leads one to enquire the nature of the supreme immortal State attained by men possessing the above marks. The Lord, therefore, proceeds to extol that supreme State, which is the same as God.

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः ।

यद्वत्त्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥ ६ ॥*

यत् which; गत्वा having reached; न not; निवर्तन्ते (they) return (to this world); तत् that supreme self-effulgent state; न neither; सूर्यः the sun; भासयते can illumine; न nor; शशाङ्कः the moon; न nor (even); पावकः fire; तत् that (is); मम My; परमम् supreme; धाम Abode.

Neither the sun nor the moon nor even fire can illumine that supreme self-effulgent state, attaining to which they never return to this world. That is My supreme Abode. (6)

The latter half of this verse is intended to convey that the eternal Abode of God, being the same as Truth, Consciousness and Bliss, transcendent and spiritual in character, and, His own manifestation, is really identical with Him. Therefore, the words 'Paramam Dhāma' in this verse denote the eternal Abode of God as well as His essential character and being etc., all taken together. In other words, that attaining to which one reaches wholly beyond this mundane existence once for all represents His supreme Abode, free from Māyā or

illusion; and that constitutes His very being. It is that which they call by such names as the Unmanifest, the Indestructible and the supreme Goal (VIII. 2). With reference to It the Śruti says:—

"Where the sun shines not, where winds blow not, where the moon sheds not her lustre, where stars twinkle not, where fire burns not, where death finds no access, where sorrows enter not and reaching where the Yogis return not, which is the goal of the Yogis and is hailed by gods, that is the supreme State, ever delightful, supremely blissful,

* The Śruti also says:—न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।

तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥

(Kāthopanishad II. ii. 15)

"The sun cannot illumine that integral Brahma or God; nor can the moon nor the stars nor even this lightning shed its lustre on It. How, then, can this physical fire light It? For all these reflect the light of Brahma alone when It shines; and it is by the light of Brahma that all this is illumined."

tranquil, eternal and ever blessed."*

The demonstrative pronoun 'Tat' occurring in the first half of this verse stands for the same integral Brahma or Puruṣottama who has been referred to in verse 5 above under the name of the 'supreme immortal State', and the statement that "It cannot be illumined by the sun, moon or fire" is intended to reveal Its inconceivable, incomprehensible and ineffable character. The idea is that the sun, moon and fire, which brighten the whole universe, and even the senses of sight, mind and speech, which are respectively presided over by the three gods mentioned above,—none of these can illumine that supreme State. This should also be understood to mean that whatever

luminaries other than those referred to above are believed to exist, are incapable either individually or collectively to illumine that supreme State; for it is from the light of Brahma—from a fraction of Its being and consciousness—that they all derive their light (XV. 12). And this is quite in the fitness of things; for how can a luminary illumine the very source of its light? How can the eye, speech, mind or any other organ portray Brahma, who is entirely out of their reach? Śruti also says:—

"Wherefrom speech along with mind return without having attained to It, that is Brahma or God.† (Brahmoṇiṣad)." Hence that immortal state is entirely beyond speech and mind etc., Its essential character can neither be represented nor explained.

Verses 1 to 3 of this chapter described the Kṣara Puruṣa under the name of the cosmic tree or the tree of mundane existence, declared the actions performed by the Akṣara Puruṣa or embodied soul in the human body and under the prompting of egotism, the sense of meum and attachment as responsible for its slavery to the Kṣara Puruṣa, and finally proclaimed self-surrender to the Primal Being or Creator as the only means of securing freedom from that bondage. This leads one to enquire the nature of the Jīva which is thus bound, as well as its essential character, and further as to who knows the Jīva and how. Therefore, with a view to elucidating all these points, the Lord first of all depicts the nature of the embodied soul.

ममैवांशो जीवल्लोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।

मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥ ७ ॥

जीवल्लोके in the living organism: सनातनः जीवभूतः the eternal Jīvātmā or embodied soul; मम एव My own; अंशः (is) a particle; प्रकृतिस्थानि resting in Prakṛti; मनःषष्ठानि इन्द्रियाणि the five senses with the mind as the sixth; कर्षति (it is that which) draws (round itself).

The eternal Jīvātmā in this body is a particle of My own being;

* यत्र न सूर्यस्तपति यत्र न वायुर्वाति यत्र न चन्द्रमा भान्ति यत्र न नक्षत्राणि भान्ति यत्र नाग्निर्दहति यत्र न मृत्युः प्रविशति यत्र न दुःखानि प्रविशन्ति सदानन्दं परमानन्दं शान्तं शाश्वतं सदाशिवं ब्रह्मादिवन्दितं योगिध्येयं परं पदं यत्र गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते योगिनः ।

† यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह ।

(Bṛhajjāb. Up. VIII. 6)

and it is that alone which draws round itself the mind and the five senses, which rest in Prakṛti. (7)

The compound word 'Jīvaloke' in this verse denotes the dwelling-place of the Jīvātmā, viz., the 'body'. It covers all the three types of bodies, viz., the physical, the astral and the causal. By declaring the Jīvātmā dwelling in these as eternal and as a particle of His own being, the Lord seeks to convey that it is He who creates, sustains and maintains the universe (XIV. 3, 4) by investing the multitude of Jīvas resting in their causal bodies with an astral and a physical body each; hence He is the supreme Father of all; therefore, even as a son is a particle of his father, the totality of Jīvas or embodied beings is a fragment of God. Again, there is affinity of character between God and the embodied soul: even as God is spiritual in essence, the embodied soul is essentially the same; hence the Jīva is a particle of God Himself. For, that which is spiritual itself can be a fragment of something equally spiritual, and not of that which is material. Like God Himself, the embodied soul too is without beginning or end; hence it is eternal and no other than God Himself.

Besides this, according to the monistic standpoint, the only correct interpretation is that just as the boundless expanse of space, which is equally and indivisibly present everywhere, appears as though divided due to its contact with a pitcher and a house etc., and just as the limited space existing in that pitcher etc. is reckoned as a part of the boundless space, even so God, though equally and indivisibly present everywhere, appears as if divided due to His contact with different bodies (XIII. 16) and the Jīvas dwelling in those bodies are regarded as so many particles of God. This is what is meant by the Lord when He says that the embodied soul is a particle of His

own being.

The use of the particle 'Eva' with 'Mama' is intended to convey that being a particle of God as shown above, the embodied soul is essentially no other than God.

The Indriyas or senses of perception are evolutes of Prakṛti; and the body in which they are located is likewise an evolute of Prakṛti: this is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the adjective 'Prakṛtisthāni' with 'Indriyāni'. Again, the five senses of perception and the mind—these six are mainly responsible for all sensory experiences; the organs of action too are ineffectual without them. That is why the Indriyas have been declared as only six in number, although in XIII. 5 the number is mentioned to be eleven. The five organs of action should, therefore, be taken as included in the senses of perception.

When the Jīvātmā migrates from one body to another, it draws from the previous body the five senses and the mind and takes them along with it. This is what is meant by the latter half of this verse. Because the mind and the senses are mainly responsible for all sensory experiences, it is these six which are said to be drawn by the Jīvātmā. The word 'Manah', forming part of the compound adjective 'Manahṣaṣṭhāni' in this verse, stands for what is known as the Antaḥ-karṇa (the inner sense), which includes Buddhi (reason). And when the Jīvātmā draws the mind and the senses, it draws them through no other medium than the Prāṇas or vital airs; the six organs mentioned in this verse should, therefore, be taken to include the five organs of action as well as the five vital airs.

It may be asked here: When, how and what for does the Jivātmā draw to itself the mind and the five senses, and what are the five senses referred to above? The Lord answers this possible query in the following two verses.

शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाप्युत्कामतीश्वरः ।

गृहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात् ॥ ८ ॥

वायुः the wind; आशयात् from the seat (of odours); गन्धान् scents; इव even as (wafts); ईश्वरः (even so) the controller of the body etc., viz., the embodied soul; अपि too; यत् शरीरम् (from) the body which; उक्कामति casts off or leaves behind; एतानि these six (viz., the mind and the five senses); गृहीत्वा taking; च then; यत् (to that) which; अवाप्नोति it puts on; संयाति migrates.

Even as the wind wafts scents from their seat, so too the Jivātmā, which is the controller of the body etc., taking the mind and the senses from the body which it leaves behind, forthwith migrates to the body which it acquires. (8)

The word 'Āśayāt' in this verse stands for those objects which naturally possess sweet odour, such as flowers, sandal-wood, saffron, musk and so on. The body from which the mind etc. are drawn, in other words, that which the Jivātmā leaves behind, has been compared in this verse to the seat of fragrance; while the mind etc. have been likened to the scents; for fragrance is nothing but the subtle element of a fragrant substance. Even so the Jivātmā has been compared to the wind. Just as the wind wafts the fragrance of flowers etc. from one place to another, so does the Jivātmā draw the astral body, which is an aggregate of the senses, mind, intellect and the vital airs, from one physical body, viz. the body which it casts off, and unites it with another, viz., that which it puts on.

The demonstrative pronoun 'Etāni' stands for the mind and the five senses, referred to in verse 7 above. 'Manas', being indicative of the inner sense or

Antahkaraṇa as it is called, includes the intellect while the Indriyas are inclusive of the five organs of action as well as the five vital airs, as indicated in the commentary on that verse. Hence 'Etāni' in the present context stands for the astral body, which is an aggregate of the seventeen categories mentioned above. The idea in referring to the Jivātmā by the term 'Īśwara' is to show that it is the controller and lord of all the ten Indriyas as well as of the mind and intellect; that is why it is capable of transferring them from one body to another.

Although the Jivātmā, being a particle of God Himself, is really eternal and immovable,—it cannot migrate from one body to another (vide II. 24),—yet, being connected with the astral body, it appears to move from one physical body to another through the astral body; this is what is indicated by the use of the verb 'Samyāti' (migrates). The same idea has been brought out in II. 22 as well.

श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च रसनं घ्राणमेव च ।

अधिष्ठाय मनश्चायं विषयानुपेक्षते ॥ ९ ॥

अयम् this (Jivātmā); श्रोत्रम् the auditory sense or the sense of hearing; चक्षुः the sense of sight; च and; स्पर्शनम् the tactile sense or the sense of touch; च and; रसनम् the sense of taste; घ्राणम् the olfactory sense or the sense of smell; च and; मनः the mind; अधिष्ठाय dwelling in; एव only; विषयान् sense-objects; उपसेवते enjoys.

It is while dwelling in the senses of hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell, as well as in the mind, that this Jivātmā enjoys the objects of senses. (9)

The Jivātmā is said to dwell in the mind and the senses only when it identifies itself with these. The statement that it enjoys the objects of senses through the mind and the senses is intended to convey that, really speaking, the Self or Spirit is neither the doer of actions nor the experiencer of sense-objects or of joys and sorrows etc. as a consequence of those actions; it derives this character from its dateless connection with Prakṛti and its evolutes, which has its root in ignorance. In XIII. 21 also we have seen that it is the Puruṣa seated in Prakṛti who enjoys the Guṇas born of Prakṛti. The Śruti also says: "It is the Self joined with the mind, intellect and senses that is termed as the enjoyer by the wise."* (Kāthopaniṣad 1. iii. 4.)

The Jivātmā has been declared as connected with the three Guṇas, as that which migrates from one body to another and as that which enjoys the objects of senses while dwelling in the body. This may lead one to enquire as to who knows this Self and how, and who is unable to know it. Anticipating this query the Lord says:—

उत्क्रामन्तं स्थितं वापि भुञ्जानं वा गुणान्वितम् ।

विमूढा नानुपश्यन्ति पश्यन्ति ज्ञानचक्षुषः ॥ १० ॥

उत्क्रामन्तम् departing (from this body); वा or; स्थितम् dwelling (in the body); वा or (again); भुञ्जानम् enjoying (the objects of senses); गुणान्वितम् (thus) connected with the three Guṇas; अपि even; विमूढाः the ignorant; न not; अनुपश्यन्ति know; ज्ञानचक्षुषः those endowed with the eye of wisdom; पश्यन्ति realize.

The ignorant know not the soul departing from, or dwelling in, the body, or enjoying the objects of senses, i. e., even when it is connected with the three Guṇas; only those endowed with the eye of wisdom are able to realize it. (10)

The word 'Guṇānvitam' stands for the soul as seated in Prakṛti. The use of the particle 'Api' is intended to convey that even though the soul departs from, and dwells in, the body and enjoys the objects of senses in the presence of all, the ignorant fail to realize its true character; much less can they realize the Self devoid of all activity and existing beyond the three Guṇas..

* आत्मेन्द्रियमनोयुक्तं भोक्तेत्याहुर्मनीषिणः ।

Men of wisdom, on the other hand, is really speaking entirely beyond Prakṛti, who are endowed with the faculty of pure, unattached and the same as consciousness itself under all circumstances judgment, know the real character of the Self even when it is connected with viz., while departing from, or dwelling the Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti. In in, the body and enjoying the objects other words, they realize that the Self of senses.

यतन्तो योगिनश्चैनं पश्यन्त्यात्मन्यवस्थितम् ।

यतन्तोऽप्यकृतात्मानो नैनं पश्यन्त्यचेतसः ॥ ११ ॥

यतन्तः striving; योगिनः the Yogis; च also; आत्मनि in (their) heart; अवस्थितम् enshrined; एनम् this (Self); पश्यन्ति realize; अकृतात्मानः (but) whose heart has not been purified; अचेतसः the ignorant; यतन्तः अपि even though striving; एनम् this (Self); न not; पश्यन्ति know.

Striving Yogis too are able to realize this Self enshrined in their heart. The ignorant, however, whose heart has not been purified, know not this Self in spite of their best endeavours. (11)

The 'striving Yogis' are those practicers of an advanced type whose mind is pure and amenable to their control, who have been referred to in the preceding verse as endowed with the eye of wisdom and who are constantly engaged in hearing, contemplation, meditation and other such spiritual practices. The demonstrative pronoun 'Enam' stands for the Jivātmā or embodied soul who is the subject of discussion in these verses and who is said to be enshrined in the heart in so far as he is connected with the body; and the correct knowledge of his real character, which is the same as eternal and pure Consciousness and Bliss, is what is meant by 'realizing this Self'.

'Akṛtātmānaḥ' are those whose mind is impure and unsteady, that is to say, who have neither wholly succeeded in washing off the impurities of their mind through the practice of disinterested action etc. nor ever undertaken adequate and sustained efforts to steady their mind through the practice of devotion etc. And those foolish men who are devoid of intelligence are spoken of as 'Achetasaḥ'. Therefore, those men of a Rajasic and

Tamasic disposition whose mind is tainted with the evils of impurity, distraction and opacity are referred to here as 'Akṛtātmānaḥ' and 'Achetasaḥ'. Such men cannot realize the truth relating to the Self even if they persist in their effort to know it through mere study of sacred books instead of trying to purify their mind. This is what is meant by the latter half of this verse.

In verse 10 above it was stated that fools cannot realize the Self, only those men of understanding who are endowed with the eye of wisdom can know it. The present verse, however, says that striving Yogis alone are able to realize the Self, not those ignorant men whose mind is impure. Although these two statements appear to bring out two different ideas, they really drive at the same truth. The word 'Mūḍhāḥ' in verse 10 stands for ordinary unintelligent persons; while 'Jñānāchakṣuṣaḥ' refers to those wise men who are endowed with a critical acumen. Even so the word 'Yoginaḥ' in the present verse stands for practicers of an advanced type, who have a Sattvic disposition and a critical mind; while

'Achetasah' refers to men of a Rajasic and Tamasic disposition. Therefore, while verse 10 pointed out in a general way as to who are able to know the Self and who are not, the Lord makes Himself more explicit in the present verse, where He says that while men of a discerning nature succeed in realizing the Self through sustained effort, the ignorant fail to do so in spite of their best endeavours.

Verse 6 raises the following questions in the mind of the reader, viz., (1) How is it that the sun, moon, fire and other luminaries, who light up the whole universe, cannot illumine God? And (2) why does the soul not return to this world after attaining to the supreme abode of God? In reply to the second question the Lord declared in verse 7 that the Jivātmā is an eternal particle of God, and in the course of the next four verses depicted its essential character, nature and behaviour and glorified those who know its real character. In order to answer the first question the Lord now proceeds to delineate His essential character along with His virtues, glory and divinity in the following four verses.

यदादित्यगतं तेजो जगद्भासयतेऽखिलम् ।

यच्चन्द्रमसि यच्चाग्नौ तत्तेजो विद्धि मामकम् ॥ १२ ॥

आदित्यगतम् existing in the sun; यत् तेजः the light which; अखिलम् जगत् the entire universe; भासयते illumines; च and; यत् which; चन्द्रमसि (exists) in the moon; यत् (and) which; अग्नौ (exists) in the fire; तत् that; मामकम् तेजः My effulgence; विद्धि know.

The light in the sun, that illumines the entire solar world, and that which shines in the moon and that too which shines in the fire, know that light to be Mine. (12)

By declaring that the light existing in the sun, moon and fire is His own effulgence, the Lord seeks to convey that whatever illuminating power there is in the three luminaries mentioned above, as well as in the organs presided over by these gods, viz., the eye, mind and speech, is only a part of His own effulgence. When even the light existing in all these luminaries is a part of His own effulgence, it is much easier to understand that the light existing in other objects, which derive their light from these luminaries, is God's own light. That is why the Lord says in verse 6 that the sun, moon and fire are unable to illuminate His being.

गामाविश्य च भूतानि धारयाम्यहमोजसा ।

पुष्णामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः ॥ १३ ॥

च and; अहम् I; गाम् the soil; आविश्य permeating; ओजसा by (My) vital power; भूतानि (all) creatures; धारयामि I sustain; च and; रसात्मकः nectarine, full of nectar; सोमः the moon; भूत्वा becoming; सर्वाः all; औषधीः herbs or plants in general; पुष्णामि I nourish.

And permeating the soil, it is I who support all creatures by My vital power; and becoming the nectarine moon, I nourish all plants. (13)

By mentioning the earth or soil as an illustration, the Lord thereby declares that the sustaining power which pervades the whole universe is a part of His own being. The idea is 'that the power of sustaining all creatures, that appears to belong to the earth, and likewise whatever sustaining power is claimed by any other substance, does not really belong to the earth or any other substance; it is a part of God's own energy or power. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

'Rasātmakah' is that which has 'Rasa' or nectar as its own being or

essence. By calling the moon 'Rasātmakah' the Lord seeks to convey that the moon is not only full of nectar or nectarine in essence but infuses nectar into all.

The 'Oṣadhiḥ' covers the entire vegetable kingdom consisting of trees, creepers, grass etc., and comprising all their limbs such as leaves, blossoms and fruits etc. By the latter half of this verse the Lord shows that just as the illuminating power in the moon is a part of His own effulgence, even so the nourishing power in the moon is a part of His own energy or power.

अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।

प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥ १४ ॥

अहम् I; प्राणिनाम् of living beings; देहम् आश्रितः lodged in the body; प्राणापानसमायुक्तः united with the Prāṇa (ingoing) and Apāna (outgoing) breaths; वैश्वानरः the fire; भूत्वा becoming; चतुर्विधम् अन्नम् the food of four kinds; पचामि I consume.

Taking the form of fire lodged in the body of all creatures and united with the Prāṇa (ingoing) and Apāna (outgoing) breaths, it is I who consume the four kinds of food. (14)

The fire which maintains the temperature in the body and helps in the digestion of food is referred to here as 'Vaiśvānarah.' Food has been classified in Indian dietetics under four main heads according to the process of swallowing it. They are as follows: (i) Bhakṣya (solid food that requires to be masticated before it can be swallowed, e.g., bread, rice, cake etc.), (ii) Bhojya (that can be directly swallowed without being masticated, e.g., gruel, pudding, curds,

curry etc.), (iii) Lehya (that which is licked with the tongue, e.g., honey, chutney etc.) and (iv) Choṣya (that which is sucked, e.g., the juice of sugarcane, mango etc.). What the Lord seeks to convey by the latter half of this verse is that just as the illuminating power in the fire is a part of His own effulgence, even so the heating power in it, i. e., its digestive and appetizing power is also a part of His energy or potency.

Developing in this way the idea adumbrated in X. 41, the Lord declared in the foregoing verses that the illuminating, sustaining, nourishing, digesting and all other powers are a part of His own power or energy. In other words, just

as it is a part of the same electric power that is instrumental in agitating the air by rotating the fan, diffusing light by lighting up electric lamps, working the flour mill, boiling water etc. and manifesting sounds through the radio etc., even so it is a part of God's own energy which operates in illumining through the sun, moon and fire etc., sustaining through earth etc., nourishing through the moon and digesting food through the gastric fire. So saying, the Lord now proceeds to delineate His essential character marked by virtues such as omnipresence, omniscience etc. and declares Himself as worth knowing in every way.

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि संनिविष्टो मत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च ।

वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो वेदान्तकृद् वेदविदेव चाहम् ॥ १५ ॥

अहम् I; सर्वस्य of all; हृदि in the heart; संनिविष्टः (remain) seated (as the inner controller); च and; मत्तः (proceed) from Me; स्मृतिः memory; ज्ञानम् knowledge; च and; अपोहनम् the ratiocinative faculty; च again; सर्वैः वेदैः through all the Vedas; अहम् एव I alone; वेद्यः (am) worth knowing; वेदान्तकृद् the father of Vedānta; च and; वेदविद् the knower of the Vedas (too); अहम् एव I alone (am).

It is I who remain seated in the heart of all creatures as the inner controller of all; and it is I who am the source of memory, knowledge and the ratiocinative faculty. Again, I am the only object worth knowing through the Vedas; I alone am the father of Vedānta and the knower of the Vedas too.

(15)

Although God is equally present everywhere, He is particularly seated in the heart of all creatures as the inner controller of all; hence the heart is the special seat of His manifestation. That is why the Lord declares more than once that He is enshrined in the hearts of all (XIII. 17; XVIII. 61); for He is directly perceived in the heart of those whose mind is pure and pellucid.

'Smṛti' consists in recollecting any object or incident that has been actually seen or heard or perceived in any other way in the past. The faculty of ascertaining the real character of any object is called Jñāna. 'Uhana' is a general term covering doubt, misapprehension and all other forms of fallacious reasoning or judgment; and the removal

of such doubts etc. is called 'Apoḥana'. It is God Himself, the inner Ruler seated in the heart of all, who rouses the above-mentioned faculties in the minds of all according to their respective Karmas. This is what is meant by the Lord when He says that He is the source of memory etc.

God is the sole objective of the Vedas. In other words, whatever is taught in the Vedas, no matter whether it relates to the ritual (Karma), worship (Upāsana) or spiritual knowledge (Jñāna), ultimately aims at arousing a feeling of aversion towards the world and enabling aspirants of all grades and qualifications to realize God. Therefore, they alone who realize God through the Vedas

correctly understand them. Those, on the other hand, who remain entangled in worldly enjoyments do not correctly understand the Vedas.

'Vedānta' means arriving at the real meaning or intention of the Vedas. In other words, resolving all doubts relating to the Vedas and reconciling all contradictions in God is what is meant

by Vedānta. By proclaiming Himself as the father of Vedānta, the Lord seeks to convey that it is God alone who brings solace to man by truly reconciling all apparent contradictions in the Vedas.

And it is He who knows the correct intention of the Vedas. This is what He means by declaring Himself as the only 'Vedavid' (knower of the Vedas).

Discussing in verses 1 to 6 the tree of creation and the advisability of uprooting it by strong dispassion, self-surrender to God, the marks of those who succeed in realizing God, and the glory of the supreme Abode of God, which is the same as God Himself, the Lord wound up the discussion relating to the Kṣara Puruṣa. Taking up from verse 7 the discussion relating to the worshipper or the Akṣara Puruṣa, also known by the name of Jīva, the Lord described his essential character, power, nature and behaviour in the following four verses and wound up the topic by glorifying the knower of the Self. From verse 12 He started the discussion relating to the Puruṣottama or supreme Person, who is the object of worship for the Jīva, and concluded the discussion in the fifteenth, describing in four verses the virtues, glory and essential character of God. Now, in order to recapitulate the substance of the three topics till the end of the chapter, the Lord delineates in the following verse the essential character of the Kṣara and Akṣara Puruṣas.

द्राविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।

क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥ १६ ॥

लोके (there are) in this world; क्षरः the perishable; च and; अक्षरः the imperishable; एव too; इमौ these; द्वौ two kinds of; पुरुषौ Puruṣas; सर्वाणि भूतानि (the bodies of) all beings; क्षरः (are spoken of as) the perishable; च and; कूटस्थः the Jivātmā or embodied soul; अक्षरः the imperishable; उच्यते is called.

The perishable and the imperishable too—these are the two kinds of Puruṣas in this world. Of these, the bodies of all beings are spoken of as the perishable; while the Jivātmā or the embodied soul is called imperishable. (16)

The use of the two adjectives being discussed in the present chapter. 'Drau' and 'Imau' with 'Puruṣau' is intended to convey that the two other than the two categories discussed under the names of the 'Aparā' and the names of 'Kṣara' and 'Akṣara' form 'Parā' Prakṛtis in Chapter VII (verses 4-5), under the names of 'Adhibhūta'.

and 'Adhyātma' in Chapter VIII (verses 4 and 3), under the names of 'Kṣetra' and 'Kṣetrajña' in Chapter XIII (verse 1) and under the names of 'Aśwattha' and 'Jīva' in this very chapter. By speaking of the one as 'Kṣara' and the other as 'Akṣara' the Lord seeks to convey that the two are entirely different from each other.

The word 'Bhūtāni' in this verse denotes all the three bodies of a Jīva, viz., the physical, the astral and the causal. It is these three types of bodies that have been referred to under the collective name of 'Kṣetra' in the opening verse of Chapter XIII and their

constituent elements enumerated in verse 5 of the same chapter. Understood in this light the word 'Bhūtāni', qualified by the adjective 'Sarvāni', would come to mean the entire world of matter. This world of matter is perishable and transient. This is what is borne out by such statements as 'All these bodies have been spoken of as perishable' (II. 18) and 'All perishable objects are Adhibhūta' (VIII. 4). The word 'Kūṭastha' denotes the Self dwelling in all bodies. The Self continues to be the same under all circumstances, it never changes; hence it is termed as 'Kūṭastha' or immutable. And it is beyond decay, destruction or extinction; hence it is imperishable.

Describing thus the essential character of the Kṣara and Akṣara Puruṣas, the Lord now discusses in the following two verses the essential character of the Supreme Person or God, who is superior to both, and also tells us what has earned Him the title of Puruṣottama (the Supreme Person).

उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः ।

यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य विभर्त्यन्यथ ईश्वरः ॥ १७ ॥

उत्तमः पुरुषः the Supreme Person; तु however; अन्यः (is yet) other; (than both these); यः who; लोकत्रयम् (all) the three worlds; आविश्य having entered; विभर्ति upholds and maintains (all); अन्यथ ईश्वरः the imperishable Lord; परमात्मा (and) the supreme Spirit; इति as; उदाहृतः has been spoken of.

The Supreme Person is yet other than these, who, having entered all the three worlds, upholds and maintains all, and has been spoken of as the imperishable Lord and the Supreme Spirit. (17)

The 'Uttama Puruṣa' mentioned in this verse is no other than the Supreme Person or God, who is eternal, pure, enlightened, free, all-powerful, supremely compassionate and full of all virtues. The use of the particle 'Tu' and the adjective 'Anyah' is intended to distinguish God from the 'Kṣara' and 'Akṣara' Puruṣas mentioned in the preceding verse. The intention is to show that the Supreme Person is distinct from and far superior to both.

The words 'Yo lokatrayam āviśya bibharti' in the latter half of this verse constitute a definition of the Supreme Person or Puruṣottama. In other words, the Supreme Person or Puruṣottama is no other than the all-supporting and all-pervading God who, having entered the whole universe, upholds the two categories 'Kṣara' and 'Akṣara' referred to under the common name of 'Puruṣa', and maintains all living beings.

The words 'Who is spoken of as the

imperishable Lord and the supreme Spirit' constitute another definition of the Supreme Person. The idea is that the Puruṣottama referred to in this verse is no other than the Supreme Spirit who, having interpenetrated all the three worlds, perishes not even after their dissolution and remains ever unaffected and unchanging, who is the Controller and Ruler as well as the almighty Lord of both the 'Kṣara' and 'Akṣara' Puruṣas and is at

the same time beyond all Guṇas, untainted and the very Self of all.

The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* contains the following definition of the three categories—Kṣara, Akṣara and Īśvara:—

"Kṣara is the same as Pradhāna or Prakṛti; while its enjoyer, the immortal Self, is the Akṣara. The one Deity (Puruṣottama) rules over both Prakṛti and Ātmā." (I. 10)*

यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।

अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥ १८ ॥

यस्मात् because; अहम् I; क्षरम् the perishable (world of matter, also called the Kṣetra); अतीतः (am wholly) beyond; च and; अक्षरात् to the imperishable (soul); अपि too; उत्तमः (am) superior; अतः therefore; लोके in the world; च and; वेदे in the Vedas (too); पुरुषोत्तमः (as) the Puruṣottama (the Supreme Person); प्रथितः अस्मि am known.

Since I am wholly beyond the perishable world of matter or Kṣetra, and am superior even to the imperishable soul, hence I am known as the Puruṣottama in the world as well as in the Vedas. (18)

By using the personal pronoun 'Aham' ('I') in this verse, the Lord unfolds to Arjuna the supreme mystery that He Himself is the Puruṣottama as defined in the preceding verse.

By speaking of Himself as beyond the perishable, the Lord seeks to convey that He is absolutely unconnected with, and entirely different from, the Kṣara Puruṣa. In other words, He is wholly unattached to the entire world of matter, which is nothing but a conglomeration of the three Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti and is perishable by nature, and which has been referred to in Chapter XIII under the names of 'Śarīra' (body) and 'Kṣetra' (Field). By calling Himself superior to the imperishable, the Lord intends to show that He is certainly

not beyond the imperishable just as He is beyond the perishable; for the soul, being a part of His own being, is immortal and spiritual. Yet He is undoubtedly superior to the soul inasmuch as, while the soul rests in Prakṛti, He is beyond Prakṛti, i. e., wholly above the Guṇas. Hence, while the soul has limited knowledge, He is all-knowing; the soul is the controlled, while He is the controller; the soul is the worshipper, while He is his lord and object of worship; the soul has limited powers, while He is all-powerful. Thus He is superior to the soul in every way.

The indeclinables 'Yasmāt' and 'Ataḥ', which are generally used to indicate a cause and effect respectively, are intended

* क्षरं प्रधानममृताक्षरं हरः क्षरात्मनावीक्षते देव एकः ।

to show that what has been stated in claim of the Lord to the title of the first half of this verse justifies the 'Puruṣottama'.

The Lord now proceeds to glorify the man who thus recognizes Him as the Supreme Person, and gives below his distinctive marks.

यो मामेवमसम्मूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम् ।

स सर्वविद् भजति मां सर्वभावेन भारत ॥ १९ ॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; यः असम्मूढः the wise man who; माम् Me; एवम् in this way; पुरुषोत्तमम् as the Supreme Person; जानाति realizes; सः that; सर्वविद् all-knowing man; सर्वभावेन with his whole being; माम् Me (the all-pervading Lord) alone; भजति (constantly) worships.

Arjuna, the wise man who thus realizes Me as the Supreme Person,— knowing all, he constantly worships Me (the all-pervading Lord) with his whole being. (19)

The indeclinable 'Evam' refers to what has been stated in the preceding two verses.

The personal pronoun 'Mām' in this verse stands for the almighty, all-supporting and all-pervading God, who is responsible for the creation, maintenance and destruction etc. of the whole universe, the greatest friend and undisputed Ruler of all, adorned with all good qualities, supremely compassionate, the greatest lover and the inner controller of all. And he who is fully convinced and reverently believes that such a God is superior to both the Kṣara and Akṣara Puruṣas as indicated in the preceding two verses, that He is the supreme Puruṣa who is both beyond the Guṇas and adorned with all good qualities, who is with and without form at the same time, and who is manifest as well as unmanifest, is said to know such God as 'Puruṣottama'.

'Asammūḍha' (undeluded) is he whose knowledge is free from doubt, misapprehension and other faults, and who has no tinge of delusion about him. The use of this word is, therefore,

intended to convey that he alone truly knows, who recognizes Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the almighty Lord or Supreme Person Himself, and refuses to believe that He was an ordinary human being.

'Sarvavid' is he who knows full well all that is worth knowing. In this chapter all entities have been discussed under three heads, viz., Kṣara, Akṣara and Puruṣottama. Therefore, he who has not only realized the true character of both Kṣara and Akṣara but knows the reality about Puruṣottama too, who is far superior to both,—he alone is 'Sarvavid' or one who possesses true knowledge of all entities; hence he has been declared as such.

He who recognizes the Lord as Puruṣottama shifts his love from the entire universe and focusses it wholly and solely on God, the supreme Beloved. He employs his reason in reposing full faith in the virtues, glory, truth, mystery, sports, essential character and greatness of God. He devotes his mind to the reverent and loving thought of His names, virtues, glory, pastimes and essential character etc., employs his ears in hearing them,

speech in reciting and eyes in seeing them and renders services to Him according to His behests, taking everything as belonging to Him and recognizing His presence everywhere and gratifying all through the performance of his obligatory duties. This is how he worships Him with his whole being. And the fact that such a man 'worships Him with his whole

being' has been mentioned simply in order to distinguish him as one who recognizes the Lord as Puruṣottama. The idea is that he who comes to recognize the Lord as beyond the Kṣara and superior to the Akṣara, constantly worships God and God alone as mentioned above: this is what constitutes the test of his recognizing the Lord as Puruṣottama.

Thus glorifying the man who recognizes Him as Puruṣottama, the Lord now concludes the chapter by pointing out the reward of grasping the teaching imparted in this chapter, which He declares as most esoteric.

इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मया न च ।

एतद् बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान् स्यात्कृतकृत्यश्च भारत ॥ २० ॥

अनघ O sinless one; भारत Arjuna; इति thus, in this way; इदम् this; गुह्यतमम् most esoteric; शास्त्रम् gospel or teaching; मया by Me; उक्तम् (has been) imparted; एतत् this; बुद्ध्वा grasping (in essence); बुद्धिमान् wise; च and; कृतकृत्यः fully satisfied; स्यात् (man) becomes.

Arjuna, this most esoteric teaching has thus been imparted by Me; grasping it in essence man becomes wise and his mission in life is accomplished. (20)

By addressing Arjuna as 'Anagha' (sinless), the Lord seeks to convey that Arjuna had a pure and unsullied heart, hence he was qualified to hear and assimilate His most esoteric teaching.

The noun 'Śāstram' qualified by the adjective 'Idam' and preceded by the indeclinable 'Iti' refers to the chapter which is going to conclude with the present verse, viz., Chapter XV. 'Idam' signifies that which is still in progress and 'Iti' marks the end of it. They thus refer to the chapter which is just going

to conclude. And the chapter has been designated as 'Śāstra' just by way of respect.

By speaking of this teaching as 'Guhyatamam' the Lord seeks to convey that the virtues, glory, truth and mystery of God with attributes form the principal theme of this chapter; hence it should be kept most secret. The Lord does not reveal before all and sundry His virtues, glory, truth and divinity as He has done in this chapter; therefore, He expects that Arjuna too should not communicate

this secret to an undeserving person. And since this teaching has been imparted by the almighty and all-knowing God Himself, it is the quintessence of all the Vedas and other sacred books. This is what the Lord seeks to impress on Arjuna's mind by stressing the fact that the teaching has been imparted by Himself—'Mayā uktam'.

He who, having fully realized the virtues, glory, truth and essential character

etc. of the Lord, comes to recognize Him as no other than the Supreme Person mentioned in verses 17 and 18 above, is said to have grasped this teaching in essence. His wisdom consists in directly realizing that Supreme Person or God; and the man who realizes God will have discharged all his obligations—attained the fruit of them all. This is what is meant by his having accomplished the mission of his life.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे पुरुषोत्तमयोगो
नाम पञ्चदशोऽध्यायः ॥ १५ ॥

*Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of
Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue
between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the
fifteenth chapter entitled "The Yoga
of the Supreme Person".*



Kalvana-Kalpataru

Embodiment of Godly Virtues



The Pious King Yudhishthira

Chapter XVI

In the present chapter the Lord discusses separately and in detail, under the name of divine properties, moral virtues and practices which are godly in character and conducive to God-Realization, and under the name of demoniac properties, evil propensities and immoral practices which are devilish in character. This He does in order that one may adopt the former and reject the latter after properly distinguishing between them. Hence this chapter has been designated as the "Yoga of Discrimination between the godly and demoniac properties."

Describing in detail in verses 1 to 3 the marks of him who is born with divine properties, the Lord discusses in brief the demoniac properties in the fourth.

In the fifth He declares that the divine properties are conducive to liberation, while the demoniac propensities lead to bondage, and heartens Arjuna by telling him that he is born with divine virtues. In the sixth He mentions two types of created beings—the godly group and the devilish group—and proposes to discuss the demoniac properties in detail. Thereafter, verses 7 to 20 describe the evil impulses, evil propensities and evil practices of men possessing a devilish nature, as well as the evil destiny that awaits them after death. Declaring in the twenty-first that lust, anger and greed, which are the chief among the demoniac propensities, are the three gates of hell, the Lord proclaims in the twenty-second that the practisant who is free from these attains the supreme goal by practising the divine virtues in a disinterested spirit. Condemning in the twenty-third those who having cast aside the scriptural ordinance are guided by their own will, the Lord concludes the chapter by insisting in the twenty-fourth that one's actions should be guided by the scriptures.

In verse 15 of Chapter VII and verses 11 and 12 of Chapter IX it was stated that fools who have embraced the demoniac and fiendish nature despise the Lord rather than adore Him. And in verses 13 and 14 of Chapter IX the Lord declared that exalted souls who have embraced the divine nature, knowing Him as the prime source of all lives and imperishable, constantly worship Him in every way with exclusive love. But as other topics continued to engage His attention, the distinguishing marks of the divine and demoniac temperaments could not be discussed on that occasion. Then, in verse 19 of Chapter XV it was pointed out that those illumined saints who recognize the Lord as the Supreme Person worship Him with their whole being. This naturally fills one with curiosity as to the marks of those saintly

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beings who have embraced the divine nature and, having recognized the Lord as the Supreme Person, worship Him with their whole being, as well as of those ignorant men who, having embraced the demoniac nature, adore Him not. Therefore, in order to describe in detail the distinctive marks and disposition of the two types of men, the Lord now introduces the present chapter. The opening three verses of this chapter discuss in detail the natural characteristics of men of a Sattvic disposition who are endowed with divine properties.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।

दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥ १ ॥

अभयम् (absolute) fearlessness; सत्त्वसंशुद्धिः perfect purity of mind; ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः constant fixity in the Yoga of meditation for the sake of Self-Realization; च and; दानम् charity (in its Sattvic form); दमः control of the senses; यज्ञः worship of God and other deities, as well as of one's elders, including the performance of Agnihotra (pouring oblations into the sacred fire) and other sacred duties; स्वाध्यायः study or teaching of the Vedas and other sacred books and chanting of God's names and praises; तपः suffering hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations; च and; आर्जवम् straightness of mind as well as of the body and senses;

Absolute fearlessness, perfect purity of mind, constant fixity in the Yoga of meditation for the sake of Self-Realization, and even so charity in its Sattvic form, control of the senses, worship of God and other deities as well as of one's elders including the performance of Agnihotra (pouring oblations into the sacred fire) and other sacred duties, study and teaching of the Vedas and other sacred books as well as the chanting of God's names and praises, suffering hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations and straightness of mind as well as of the body and senses; (1)

Nervous excitement caused by the apprehension of losing something which is agreeable and meeting with something which is unwelcome is called 'Bhaya' or fear, e. g., the fear of loss of prestige, fear of ignominy, fear of scandal, fear of ailment, fear of punishment by law, fear of ghosts and evil spirits and fear of death etc. The total absence of all these fears is called 'Abhaya' or absolute fearlessness.

The inner sense or mind is called 'Sattva'. Hence 'Sattva-saṁsuddhi' means the complete elimination from the mind of all morbid feelings such as partiality and prejudice, delight and grief, the feelings of 'I' and 'mine', infatuation and jealousy etc., as well as of impure and sinful impulses of all kinds.

True knowledge of God is called 'Jñāna'; and constant absorption of mind

in the thought of God with a view to His realization is what is meant here by 'Jñānayogavyavasthiti'.

'Dāna' (Charity) consists in giving away food, clothing, knowledge, medicine and other things in a disinterested spirit, as a matter of duty and with due regard to the place, time, and recipient of the gift (XVII. 20).

'Dama' consists in diverting the senses from their objects and bringing them under one's own control.

'Yajña' means offering worship to God and other deities, the Brahmans or members of the priestly class, saints, a newcomer and one's own parents and other elders, and includes all sacrificial performances such as Havana (offering daily oblations to the sacred fire), Balivaiśwadeva (offering a portion of the

daily meat to all creatures and presenting oblations to fire before meals) etc.

'Swādhyāya' includes the study and teaching of the Vedas and all other sacred books dealing with the virtues, glory, truth, essential character and divine pastimes of God, such as the great Epics and Purāṇas, and the chanting of His names and praises etc.

'Tapas' consists in mortifying one's mind and senses by suffering hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations. This is, however, not the same 'Tapas' as has been discussed in Chapter XVII under three separate heads, in so far as it relates to the body, speech and mind; for items like non-violence, truthfulness, purity, Swādhyāya and Ārjaya etc., which have been included in 'Tapas' in that chapter, have been mentioned here separately.

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।

दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् ॥ २ ॥

अहिंसा non-violence in thought, word and deed; सत्यम् truthfulness and geniality of speech; अक्रोधः absence of anger even on provocation; त्यागः disclaiming the doership in respect of actions; शान्तिः quietude or composure of mind; अपैशुनम् abstaining from malicious gossip; भूतेषु towards all creatures; दया compassion; अलोलुप्त्वं absence of attachment to the objects of senses even during their contact with the senses; मार्दवं mildness; ह्रीः a sense of shame in violating the injunctions of the scriptures or even established usage; अचापलम् (and) abstaining from frivolous pursuits;

Non-violence in thought, word and deed, truthfulness and geniality of speech, absence of anger even on provocation, disclaiming doership in respect of actions, quietude or composure of mind, abstaining from malicious gossip, compassion towards all creatures, absence of attachment to the objects of senses even during their contact with the senses, mildness, a sense of shame in transgressing against the scriptures or usage, and abstaining from frivolous pursuits;

Inflicting pain in any shape, whether out of greed, ignorance or anger, on any
in an intense, moderate or mild form, living being whatsoever at any time or

place personally or causing another to do so or even countenancing anyone who does so,—all these are acts of violence indeed. Taking a vow not to perpetrate such violence on any account through mind, speech or body, that is to say, wishing ill to none, taking particular care not to use abusive language, harsh words or harmful language with respect to another, and refusing to kill, torment or harm anyone through one's body—all these are comprised in non-violence.

Truthfulness or veracity consists in taking all possible care to speak agreeable and wholesome words in an honest attempt to represent faithfully to others what has been seen, heard or experienced through the senses and mind.

The excitement coupled with a feeling of aversion that a man feels in his mind either due to his bad temper or when he is subjected to insult, injury or calumny, or when someone acts against his will, abuses him or commits a wrong in his presence, is 'Krodha' in its internal form. This internal feeling of indignation subsequently seeks outer expression in the form of a burning sensation in the body and mind, a distortion of the face, and blood-shot eyes. All these betoken an advanced stage of anger. Both these stages, the former of which burns the angry man alone, while the latter burns the object of anger too, are covered by the term 'Krodha' or anger. Absence of anger in all these forms is referred to in this verse as 'Akrodha'.

'Tyāga' or renunciation, in this verse, consists in disclaiming the doership in respect of all actions. Such renunciation is preceded, in the case of the Jñānayogī, by the belief that it is the Guṇas alone that are acting on the Guṇas, and that the practisant has nothing to do with those actions; while the devotee believes that he is a mere puppet in the hands of the Lord, that it is the Lord who causes his mind, speech and body to perform

all their functions just as He pleases, that the devotee is neither capable of doing anything by himself nor does he actually do anything. Renunciation can also be taken to consist in giving up the feeling of meum, attachment, the desire for fruit and self-interest in respect of one's actions even though continuing to perform one's obligatory duties. Or again it may mean the renunciation of all objects, thoughts and activities which hinder one's spiritual progress.

'Śānti' is that Sattvic type of placidity which appears in a mind which is free from all distractions and has banished all thought of the world.

Discovering or exposing the faults of others, and even so reproaching or slandering another go by the name of 'Paiśuna'. And total absence of this tendency is called 'Apaiśuna'.

The urge that a man feels in his mind to relieve by any means whatsoever the suffering of any living being who is found in distress, without expecting any return, and to make him happy in every way is called Dayā or compassion. Taking a vow not to inflict pain on another is called 'Ahimsā' or non-violence, and the impulse to make others happy is known by the name of 'Dayā'. Here lies the difference between 'Ahimsā' and 'Dayā'.

Feeling attracted towards the objects of senses on their coming into contact with the senses, and the longing that is felt in the mind for the possession of such objects when one sees others enjoying them is called 'Loluptva'; and the total absence of this 'Loluptva' is what they call 'Aloluptva'.

Shedding sternness in every form when the mind, speech and behaviour of a man become extremely mild, he is said to have acquired what is known as 'Mārdava'.

Having resolved not to violate the

injunctions of the Vedas and other sacred books or even the established usage, the hesitation that one feels in violating them is known as 'Hri'.

ground under one's feet, indulging in incoherent talks and wild thoughts and similar other fruitless activities of the hands and feet, speech and mind constitute what is known as 'Chāpala';

Rocking one's hands and feet etc., tearing pieces of straw, scratching the

it is also called 'Pramāda'. 'Achāpala' is the total negation of 'Chāpala'.

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।

भवन्ति सम्पदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥ ३ ॥

तेजः sublimity; क्षमा forbearance; धृतिः fortitude; शौचम् external purity; अद्रोहः bearing enmity to none; नातिमानिता absence of self-esteem; भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; दैवीम् सम्पदम् the gifts divine; अभिजातस्य of him who is born with; भवन्ति are (the marks).

Sublimity, forbearance, fortitude, external purity, bearing enmity to none and absence of self-esteem—these are the marks of him who is born with the divine gifts, Arjuna. (3)

'Tejas' is that peculiar property, possessed by noble souls, which compels even those who are given to the pursuit of the pleasures of sense and are of a vile disposition to desist from wrong-doing in their presence and take to noble pursuits according to their advice.

Harbouring no intention to punish, or cause to be punished, a wrong-doer, having no inclination to retaliate, treating his offences as no offence at all and ignoring them altogether—this is what they call 'Kṣamā' or forbearance. 'Akrodha' has been characterized as a mere negation of anger, whereas forbearance precludes the desire even to punish an offence according to law. Here lies the difference between 'Akrodha' and 'Kṣamā'.

To remain self-possessed even when confronted with the greatest calamity, danger or sorrow, and not to deviate from the path of righteousness or duty under the influence of lust, anger, fear or greed is called 'Dhṛti' or fortitude.

Money is purified through honest and truthful dealings, even so one's diet is

purified through provisions purchased with such money, one's conduct is edified through appropriate behaviour and the body is purified through cleaning with water and clay etc. All this is included in external purity. Internal purity has been separately mentioned in verse 1 under the name of 'Sattvasamāuddhi'.

Bearing no grudge or enmity in the least degree even towards those who behave as enemies is called 'Adroha'.

Regarding oneself as superior, exalted or worthy of adoration and cherishing a special craving for honour, fame, prestige and respect etc., and feeling overjoyed on attaining these even though not hankering after them,—this is what they call 'Ātimānitā' or overestimating oneself. And the total negation of these is called 'Nātimānitā'.

'Deva' means God. Therefore, 'Daivi Sampad' is a collective name for the noble virtues and practices which are conducive to God-Realization and are divine in character. They are also known

by the name of 'Daivī Prakṛti' or divine nature.

The latter half of this verse is intended to convey that the above two and a half verses, viz., verses 1 and 2 and the first half of verse 3 enumerate

under the name of 'Daivī Sampad' twenty-six noble virtues and practices. Therefore, he alone who is naturally endowed with these virtues or who has acquired them through practice is said to be possessed of 'Daivī Sampad' or the divine gift.

Having thus described the marks of him who is endowed with 'Daivī Sampad', which is worth acquiring, the Lord now discusses in brief the marks of him who is possessed of demoniac properties, which are worth renouncing.

दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च ।

अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य पार्थ सम्पदमासुरीम् ॥ ४ ॥

पार्थ O son of Pṛthā, Arjuna; दम्भः hypocrisy; दर्पः arrogance; च and; अभिमानः pride; च and; क्रोधः anger; पारुष्यम् sternness; च and; अज्ञानम् ignorance; एव too; आसुरीम् सम्पदम् demoniac properties; अभिजातस्य (as marks) of him who is born with.

Hypocrisy, arrogance and pride, and anger, sternness and ignorance too—these are the marks of him who is born with demoniac properties. (4)

'Dambha' or hypocrisy consists in posing as a virtuous man, a devotee, a man of wisdom or a saint or making a false show of piety, generosity, devotion, religious discipline or practice of Yoga or assuming any other role which may serve one's end, for the sake of honour, fame, prestige and respect etc., out of cupidity or with intent to cheat another.

'Darpa' or arrogance is the feeling of pride arising out of a consciousness of one's learning, wealth, extensive family, noble birth, youth, strength and power etc., on account of which man looks down upon others and shows disrespect to them.

'Abhimāna' or pride consists in regarding oneself as superior, exalted or worthy of adoration, hankering after honour, fame, prestige and respect etc. and feeling delighted on attaining these.

The excitement coupled with a

feeling of aversion that a man feels in his mind either due to his bad temper or due to association with men who are irascible by nature, or when he is subjected to insult, injury or calumny, or when someone acts against his will, abuses him or commits a wrong in his presence—which rouses a spirit of revenge in his mind, suffuses his eyes with blood, makes his lips throb, distorts his face, deprives him of his reason, and dulls his sense of duty.

'Pāruṣya' is sternness or the total negation of mildness. Railing at or taunting another and speaking bitter words to anyone constitute harshness of speech; even so want of humility is sternness of body and the spirit of revenge and the feeling of hard-heartedness as opposed to forbearance and compassion represent sternness of mind.

'Ajñāna' or ignorance here means lack of correct knowledge about truth and

untruth, virtue and sin etc., or forming a wrong notion about them.

and the evil propensities and immoral practices that are found to exist in them are known as the demoniac properties or 'Āsuri Sampad' as the Lord chooses to call them.

Those unbelievers who are ungodly and deny His existence are called Asuras;

Describing thus the marks of those who are endowed with the divine and the demoniac gift respectively, the Lord now tells us the fruit of the two and cheers Arjuna by declaring him as born with the divine virtues.

दैवी सम्पद् विमोक्षाय निबन्धायसुरी मता ।

मा शुचः सम्पदं दैवीमभिजातोऽसि पाण्डव ॥ ५ ॥

दैवी सम्पद् the divine gift; विमोक्षाय as conducive to liberation; आसुरी (and) the demoniac gift; निबन्धाय as conducive to bondage; मता has been recognized; पाण्डव O son of Pāṇḍu, Arjuna; मा शुचः (therefore) grieve not; दैवीम् सम्पदम् the divine endowment; अभिजातः असि you are born with.

The divine gift has been recognized as conducive to liberation, and the demoniac gift as conducive to bondage. Grieve not, Arjuna; for you are born with the divine endowment. (5)

The divine gift as consisting of the Sattvic virtues and practices enumerated in verses 1 to 3 above secures absolute and lasting freedom from the bondage of mundane existence and unites one with God, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. Such is the opinion of the Vedas and other sacred books, as well as of holy men. This is what is meant by the statement that the divine gift has been recognized as conducive to liberation.

Even so the demoniac gift—briefly mentioned in verse 4 above—as consisting of evil propensities and immoral practices, which have the element of Tamas with an admixture of Rajas

preponderating in them, involves man in the trammels of worldly existence and leads to his downfall. The Vedas and other scriptures as well as holy men bear testimony to this fact. This is what is meant by the declaration that the demoniac gift has been recognized as conducive to bondage.

The latter half of this verse is intended to inspire Arjuna by assuring him that he was naturally endowed with all the virtues constituting the divine gift. And since the latter brings about freedom from the bondage of worldly existence, there could be no doubt about his attaining blessedness. Hence he had no reason to grieve for.

The divine gift has been dealt with at length at the beginning of this chapter as well as before, but the demoniac gift has been very briefly touched so far. The Lord, therefore, takes up the subject now in order to discuss in detail the nature as well as the conduct and behaviour of men possessing a demoniac disposition.

द्वौ भूतसर्गौ लोकेऽस्मिन् दैव आसुर एव च ।

दैवो विस्तरदाः प्रोक्त आसुरं पार्थ मे शृणु ॥ ६ ॥

पार्थ O son of Prthā, Arjuna; अस्मिन् लोके in this world; द्वौ भूतसर्गौ (there are) two types of created beings or men; एव only; दैवः (viz.,) the one possessing a divine nature; च and; आसुरः the other possessing a demoniac disposition; दैवः (of these) the type possessing a divine nature; विस्तरदाः in detail; प्रोक्तः has been dealt with; आसुरम् (about) the type possessing a demoniac disposition; मे from Me; शृणु (now) hear (in detail).

There are only two types of men in this world, Arjuna,—the one possessing a divine nature and the other possessing a demoniac disposition. Of these, the type possessing a divine nature has been dealt with at length; now hear in detail from Me about the type possessing a demoniac disposition. (6)

'Sarga' means creation, and 'Bhūta-sarga' signifies an order of created beings. 'Asmin loka' refers to the world of human beings and the present chapter discusses the characteristics of human beings; that is why 'Bhūtasargau' has been translated as two orders or types of human beings.

The use of the particle 'Eva', which restricts the number of the types of human beings to two only, is intended to convey that although there are many types of human beings, the two mentioned in the present verse are the chief among them, as other types are included in them.

Of the two types of human beings mentioned here, the one which is Sattvic in character possesses a divine disposition;

while the other, which is dominated by Tamas blended with Rajas, possesses a demoniac disposition. Men possessing a fiendish or delusive nature should be taken as included in the type possessing a demoniac disposition.

The nature, conduct and behaviour of those possessing a divine disposition have been discussed at length in verses 1 to 3 of this chapter as well as in other chapters; but the nature, conduct and behaviour of those possessing a demoniac disposition have been touched only briefly. Therefore, the Lord now undertakes to describe them in detail in the following verses in order that they may be eschewed *in toto*. This is what is sought to be conveyed in the latter half of this verse.

Thus inviting Arjuna to hear attentively the marks of those possessing a demoniac disposition, the Lord now proceeds to describe them.

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुराः ।

न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते ॥ ७ ॥

आसुराः possessing a demoniac disposition; जनाः men; प्रवृत्तिम् right activity; च and; निवृत्तिम् right abstinence from activity; च even; न not; विदुः know;

तेषु in them; न neither; शौचम् purity (internal or external); न nor; आचारः (good) conduct; च न nor; सत्यम् truthfulness; अपि even; विद्यते there is.

Men possessing a demoniac disposition know not what is right activity and what is right abstinence from activity. Hence they possess neither purity (external or internal) nor good conduct nor even truthfulness. (7)

Such action alone is worth performing or binding upon man as is conducive to his true well-being here as well as hereafter. Man should undertake such action only. And such action as is attended with evil consequences is worth eschewing and one should abstain from that. The first half of this verse is intended to convey that those possessing a demoniac disposition never realize that they should undertake only such actions as are worth undertaking and should abstain from those which are worth eschewing; hence they are guided in their activities by their own whims or caprices. 'Śauca' signifies external as well as internal purity, which has been discussed at length in the commentary on XIII. 7; 'Āchāra' comprises such noble activities as form an inseparable part of such purity; and 'Satya' consists in speaking words which are sincere, wholesome and true, as has been shown in the commentary on verse 2 of this very chapter. Men possessing a demoniac disposition have none of these virtues; on the other hand, their life is marred by impurity, immorality and mendacity.

Thus showing lack of discrimination, purity and good conduct etc. in those possessing a demoniac disposition, the Lord now describes their atheistic outlook.

असत्यमप्रतिष्ठं ते जगदादुरनीश्वरम् ।
अपरस्परसम्भूतं किमन्यत्कामहैतुकम् ॥ ८ ॥

ते these people (men possessing a demoniac disposition); आदुः say; जगत् the world; अप्रतिष्ठम् (is) without any foundation; असत्यम् having no reality, absolutely unreal; अनीश्वरम् (and) godless; अपरस्परसम्भूतम् brought forth by mutual union (of the male and female); कामहैतुकम् (therefore) conceived in lust; अन्यत् किम् what else (than this).

Men possessing a demoniac disposition say this world is without any foundation, absolutely unreal and godless, brought forth by mutual union of the male and female and hence conceived in lust; what else than this ? (8)

The present verse represents the arbitrary and fanciful ideas of those who possess a demoniac disposition. They believe that this universe, consisting of animate and inanimate creation, has no basis in the shape of God or the moral law nor has it any abiding reality. That is to say, no living being had any existence prior to its birth nor does a creature have any life after death, nor does it have any creator, controller or ruler like God; it has no other object to fulfil except the gratification of carnal desires.

This naturally tempts one to enquire the nature and conduct of those who hold such atheistic views. Anticipating this query the Lord now describes the distinctive traits of such unbelievers in the following four verses.

एतां दृष्टिमवष्टभ्य नष्टात्मानोऽल्पबुद्धयः ।

प्रभवन्त्युग्रकर्माणः क्षयाय जगतोऽहिताः ॥ ९ ॥

एताम् this; दृष्टिम् (false) view; अवष्टभ्य clinging to; नष्टात्मानः those who have lost their self; अल्पबुद्धयः slow-witted; अहिताः foes (of all); उग्रकर्माणः of terrible deeds; जगतः क्षयाय to the destruction of the universe; प्रभवन्ति prove equal.

Clinging to this false view these slow-witted men of a vile disposition and terrible deeds, these enemies of mankind, prove equal only to the destruction of the universe. (9)

The activities of these men of a demoniac disposition are all governed by the atheistic outlook mentioned above: this is what is meant by the words 'Etām dr̥ṣṭim avaṣṭabhya'.

And they habitually perform with their mind, speech and body gruesome deeds that tend to intimidate, oppress and exterminate the animate and inanimate creation.

These men of atheistic persuasions deny the existence of the soul; they are body-centred or materialists. Hence their nature gets debased, they never feel inclined to perform any virtuous deed. All their resolves are made with an eye to sensuous enjoyment. Their mind is ever busy hatching evil designs against others; in this way they harm themselves too.

Again, whatever these people do with their intellect, mind, speech or body during their lifetime is solely intended to torment or obliterate the entire creation consisting of animate and inanimate beings. This is what is meant by the statement that they are only capable of bringing ruination to the world.

काममाश्रित्य दुष्पूरं दम्भमानमदान्विताः ।

मोहाद् गृहीत्वासद्ग्राहान् प्रवर्तन्तेऽशुचिब्रताः ॥ १० ॥

दम्भमानमदान्विताः (men) full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance; दुष्पूरम् insatiable; कामम् longing; आश्रित्य cherishing; मोहाद् through ignorance; असद्ग्राहान् false doctrines; गृहीत्वा embracing; अशुचिब्रताः men of impure conduct; प्रवर्तन्ते move (in this world).

Cherishing insatiable desires and embracing false doctrines through ignorance, these men of impure conduct move in this world, full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance. (10)

'Dambha' or hypocrisy consists in an air of superiority, in order to achieve assuming according to the needs of the one's selfish ends in the shape of honour, occasion an appearance which gives one wealth, adoration and prestige etc. 'Māna'

or pride consists in regarding oneself as worthy of honour or adoration; and 'Mada' or arrogance is the same as remaining intoxicated with the pride of one's fine person, merit, birth, power, learning, rank, wealth and progeny etc. All these evils are present in men of a demoniac disposition; hence they have been spoken of as 'Dambhamāna-madānvitāḥ'.

The 'Kāma' or desire to acquire the various enjoyments of the world can never be satisfied; hence it has been characterized as 'Duṣpūram' or insatiable. And entertaining in one's mind a firm

resolve to satisfy this longing is what is meant by cherishing such a longing.

Evolving heretic doctrines of various kinds they remain obstinately clinging to them. This is what is meant by their embracing false doctrines.

'Aśuchivratāḥ' means that their diet, their mode of living, their manner of talking, their trade and commerce, their monetary transactions and their social dealings and behaviour, all are dirty and governed by heterodox principles.

The verb 'Pravartante' shows that these people are guided in their behaviour by their own whims or caprices.

चिन्तामपरिमेयां च प्रलयान्तामुपाश्रिताः ।

कामोपभोगपरमा एतावदिति निश्चिताः ॥ ११ ॥

च and; प्रलयान्ताम् ending (only) with death; अपरिमेषाम् innumerable; चिन्ताम् cares; उपाश्रिताः giving themselves up to; कामोपभोगपरमाः devoted to the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures; एतावद् this much (is joy); इति so; निश्चिताः (are) positive in their belief.

Giving themselves up to innumerable cares ending only with death, they remain devoted to the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures and are positive in their belief that this is the highest limit of joy. (11)

The cares with which these people are engrossed are so limitless that they can neither be numbered nor can their extent be gauged. They do not cease till a whole lifetime is over and persist till the last moment. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

The accumulation and enjoyment of

luxuries of various kinds is the sole aim of their existence. Their life is thus wholly directed towards the realization of this end and they are fully convinced that the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures is the only joy worth the name. This is the idea brought out in the latter half of this verse.

आशापाशशतैर्बद्धाः

कामक्रोधपरायणाः ।

ईहन्ते

कामभोगार्थमन्यायेनार्थसंचयान् ॥ १२ ॥

आशापाशशतैः by a hundred ties of expectation; बद्धाः held in bondage; कामक्रोधपरायणाः wholly giving themselves up to lust and anger; कामभोगार्थम् for the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures; अन्यायेन by unfair means; अर्थसंचयान् hoards of money and other objects; ईहन्ते strive (to obtain).

Held in bondage by hundreds of ties of expectation and wholly giving themselves up to lust and anger, they strive to amass by unfair means hoards of money and other objects for the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures. (12)

The mind of men possessing a demoniac disposition revels in various projects of sense-gratification and they cherish innumerable hopes of various kinds to see those projects materialize. Their mind is now tossed by the hope of this enjoyment, the very next moment it feels drawn towards another and clings to a third at another moment; in this way they are never free from the shackles of hope. This is what is meant by the phrase 'Āsāpāśātataih baddhāh'.

For the realization of these hopes they never depend on God or any other

deity, noble act or pious thought, but take recourse to lust and anger alone. Hence they have been spoken of as wholly given up to lust and anger.

He who attempts to usurp others' possessions etc. by taking recourse to such unlawful or unauthorized means as thieving, robbery, dacoity, lying, chicanery, duplicity, hypocrisy, violence, diplomacy, gambling, fraudulence, poisoning, false accusation and intimidation etc. under the prompting of lust and anger, is said to strive for the accumulation of wealth by unfair means.

Having discussed in the preceding four verses the distinctive marks and conduct of men possessing a demoniac disposition, the Lord now proceeds to describe in the following four verses their resolves, which are prompted by delusion and the feelings of 'I' and 'mine', as well as their evil destiny.

इदमद्य मया लब्धमिमं प्राप्स्ये मनोरथम् ।

इदमस्तीदमपि मे भविष्यति पुनर्धनम् ॥ १३ ॥

maya by me; ady today; idam this; labdham has been secured; imam (and) this; manoratham ambition; prāpsyē shall (now) realize; me with me; idam this (much); dhanam wealth; asti is (already); pun: api (and) yet again; idam this; bhaviṣyati shall be.

They say to themselves, "This much has been secured by me today and now I shall realize this ambition. So much wealth is already with me and yet again this shall be mine. (13)

The word 'Manoratha' in this verse stands for the thought of wife, progeny, wealth, land, house, honour, fame and all other objects that are sought for by the mind. The present verse is, therefore, intended to convey that men possessing a demoniac disposition indulge in egotistic thoughts of various kinds. They attribute

their success in attaining the object of their desire in the past to their personal endeavour and also look to the same for their success in realizing further objects of their desire. They are conscious of the fact that they are already masters of a considerable fortune and power and confidently hope to have more not long afterwards.

असौ मया हतः शत्रुर्हनिष्ये चापरानपि ।

ईश्वरोऽहमहं भोगी सिद्धोऽहं बलवान् सुखी ॥ १४ ॥

असौ that; शत्रुः enemy; मया by me; हतः has been killed; च and; अपरान् (those) others; अपि too; अहम् I; हनिष्ये shall kill; अहम् I (am); ईश्वरः the lord (of all); भोगी the enjoyer (of all power); अहम् I (am); सिद्धः endowed with all occult powers; बलवान् (and am) mighty; सुखी (and) happy.

That enemy has been slain by me and I shall kill those others too. I am the lord of all, the enjoyer of all power; I am endowed with all supernatural powers, and am mighty and happy. (14)

Men of a demoniac disposition, who regard the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures as the *summum bonum* of life, are slaves of lust and anger. They have no faith in God, religion or the law of recompense. Therefore, intoxicated with pride they feel that there was none in this world who could stand in their way or oppose them with impunity. Therefore, boiling with rage, they haughtily brag in a stern voice that such and such a man, who was so mighty and such a world-renowned and influential personality, was despatched by them in no time because he stood on inimical terms with them; nay, others too, who are at loggerheads with them or will be inimically disposed towards them shall be easily killed by them, however powerful they may be. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

Besides being egotistic, these people are intoxicated with pride as well. They feel that no one in this world is greater than they, that they can kill or protect,

uproot or establish, whomsoever they like. Hence with great pride they say, "Oh, we are absolutely free, everything lies in our own hands; who else than us is powerful, we are the masters of all fortune. Nay, we are the lord of all lords, the supreme Person too. Every one should worship us. We are not only the masters of fortune, we also enjoy it. We have never met with failure in our life; to whatever task we have set ourselves, our efforts have invariably been crowned with success. Our life has been ever successful; nay, we are endowed with a prophetic vision, future events become known to us beforehand. We know everything, nothing is hidden from us. Nay, we are supremely powerful; our mental or physical strength is so great that anyone who depends on it will be able to conquer the world through it. Due to all these reasons we are very happy; all worldly joys are ever at our service and will continue to serve us." This is the idea brought out in the latter half of this verse.

आढ्योऽभिजनवानसि कोऽन्योऽस्ति सदृशो मया ।

यक्ष्ये दास्यामि मोदिष्य इत्यज्ञानविमोहिताः ॥ १५ ॥

अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ता मोहजालसमावृताः ।

प्रसक्ताः कामभोगेषु पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ ॥ १६ ॥

आत्न्यः wealthy; अभिजनवान् having a big family; अस्मि I am; मया सदृशः like unto me; अन्यः कः who else; अस्ति is; यक्ष्ये I will sacrifice (to gods); दास्यामि I will give (alms); मोदिष्ये I will make merry; इति thus; अज्ञानविमोहिताः blinded by ignorance; अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ताः with their minds bewildered by numerous thoughts; मोहजालसमावृताः enveloped in the mesh of delusion; कामभोगेषु to the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures; प्रसक्ताः addicted; अशुचौ नरके into the foulest hell; पतन्ति they fall.

I am wealthy and own a large family; who else is like unto me? I will sacrifice to gods, I will give alms, I will make merry. Thus blinded by ignorance, enveloped in the mesh of delusion and addicted to the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures, their mind bewildered by numerous thoughts, these men of a devilish disposition fall into the foulest hell. (15-16)

The first half of the fifteenth verse shows how these men of a demoniac disposition boast of their wealth and big family. These people boastfully declare that there is no limit to their wealth, their kinsmen and relatives, their friends and associates, their followers and companions. At a single call from them countless men are ready to follow them. In this way none can match them in wealth and man-power.

The verbs 'Yakṣye' and 'Dāsyāmi' give expression to their false pride relating to the performance of sacrifices and charity. The idea is that men possessing a demoniac disposition never perform nor seek to perform the Sattvic type of sacrifices; likewise they never practise nor seek to practise the Sattvic form of charity. They make an external show of sacrifices and charity simply in order to create an impression on others and boastfully declare that none can vie with them in the performance of sacrifices and charity.

The verb 'Modiṣye' gives expression to their false pride relating to merriment. Indulging in boasts of various kinds they proudly picture to their mind the delight

that will be theirs, how they will be transported with joy and enjoy life to their heart's content.

The ignorance with which they are said to be blinded is no other than the egotism revealed in verses 13-14 above as well as in the present verses.

The compound adjective 'Anekachitta-vibhrāntāḥ' shows that men possessing a demoniac disposition are unable to fasten their attention on any one object, they are fickle-minded.

'Kāmaabhogeṣu Prasaktāḥ' shows that such men look upon the gratification of the senses as the sole object of their existence; that is responsible for their excessive attachment to the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures.

The words "Aśuchau Narake Patanti" describe the evil destiny of men possessing a demoniac disposition. The idea is that men of this type perpetrate sins of various kinds for the gratification of their senses and are condemned to frightful hells of various appellations, which are full of suffering and abound in obnoxious substances such as faeces, urine, blood, pus and so on.

In verse 15 above it was stated that men possessing a demoniac disposition vauntingly proclaim their intention to 'perform sacrifices'; the Lord accordingly reveals the nature of their sacrificial performances in the following verse.

आत्मसम्भाविताः स्तब्धा धनमानमदान्विताः ।

यजन्ते नामयज्ञैस्ते दम्भेनाविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ १७ ॥

ते those; आत्मसम्भाविताः self-conceited; स्तब्धाः haughty; धनमानमदान्विताः intoxicated by wealth and honour; नामयज्ञैः through nominal sacrifices; दम्भेन for ostentation; अविधिपूर्वकम् without following the sacred rituals; यजन्ते worship (God).

Intoxicated by wealth and honour, those self-conceited and haughty men worship God through nominal sacrifices for ostentation without following the sacred rituals. (17)

'Ātmasambhāvitāḥ' are those who are in their own estimation superior to all in every respect, honourable, noble and worthy of adoration.

Similarly 'Stabdhāḥ' are those who are too arrogant to behave politely with anybody, not even with those who are worthy of their adoration.

The sacrifices they perform are merely nominal and devoid of faith and are only intended to impress others. They are thus Tamasic in character and that is why they lead to hell; for the Lord says in Chapter XIV above that men of a Tamasic disposition fall into hell. For a detailed exposition of what is called 'Tāmasa Yajña' the reader is referred to XVII. 13.

Describing thus the nature of their sacrificial performances, the Lord now delineates their own disposition, which is responsible for their evil fate.

अहंकारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं च संश्रिताः ।

मामात्मपरदेहेषु प्रद्विषन्तोऽभ्यसूयकाः ॥ १८ ॥

अहंकारम् egotism; बलम् brute force; दर्पम् arrogance; कामम् lust; च and; क्रोधम् anger etc.; संश्रिताः given over to; अभ्यसूयकाः calumnizing others; आत्मपरदेहेषु (dwelling) in their own body as well as in those of others; माम् Me (the inner controller of all); प्रद्विषन्तः hating.

Given over to egotism, brute force, arrogance, lust and anger etc. and calumnizing others, they hate Me (the inner controller of all) dwelling in their own bodies as well as in those of others. (18)

Full of egotism, these men possessing a demoniac disposition proclaim themselves as the lord of all, the enjoyer of all luxuries, accomplished in every way, mighty and happy. Nothing is impossible in their eyes. Resorting to brute force, they antagonize others and proceed to intimidate, assault and involve them into trouble. They consider none as a match for their might. Full of arrogance they boast of their big fortune and large family. They recognize none as their equal. Given over to lust, they indulge in immoral acts of various kinds. And obsessed by anger they threaten to kill whosoever acts in opposition to their

will or dares to offend them. Abandoning themselves in this way to egotism etc. they indulge in dreams and idle talks of various kinds; and whatever they do is prompted and backed by all these evil propensities. They never take their stand on God, religion or sacred lore. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

* The use of the conjunctive particle 'Cha' is intended to cover many more evils besides those explicitly mentioned in the verse, viz., hypocrisy, greed, infatuation and so on.

'Asūyā' consists in discovering and condemning the faults of others, repudiating their virtues and painting them as a vice. Men possessing a demoniac disposi-

tion are habituated to this. To say nothing of others, they cavil even at God and holy men. This is what is sought to be conveyed by adding the prefix 'Abhi' before 'Asūyakāḥ', which shows that none escapes their censorious eye.

In the latter half of this verse the Lord shows that men of a demoniac disposition, who antagonize others and seek to oppress them in various ways and also suffer themselves, thereby bear malice to Him, inasmuch as He dwells in them as well as in others as their inner controller. To antagonize or hate another, to harm another and to inflict suffering on another is to hate God Himself dwelling in one's own body as well as in those of others.

Thus describing in verses 7 to 18 the evil propensities and immoral practices etc. of those possessing a demoniac disposition, the Lord now condemns such people in strongest terms and describes their evil fate in the following two verses just in order to evoke a feeling of repugnance towards those evil traits and practices.

तानहं द्विषतः क्रूरान् संसारेषु नराधमान् ।

क्षिपाम्यजस्रमशुभानासुरीष्वेव योनिषु ॥ १९ ॥

तान् those; द्विषतः hating; अशुभान् sinful; क्रूरान् (and) cruel; नराधमान् vilest among men; अहम् I; संसारेषु in the world; अजस्रम् repeatedly; आसुरीषु योनिषु into demoniacal wombs; एव only; क्षिपामि cast.

These haters, sinful, cruel and vilest among men, I cast again and again into demoniacal wombs in this world. (19)

The demonstrative pronoun 'Tān', qualified by the adjectives 'Dviṣataḥ', 'Aśubhān', 'Krūrān' and 'Narādhamān', refers to men possessing a demoniac disposition who have been spoken of at length in the foregoing verses. Their vile propensities and immoral practices alone are responsible for their evil destiny: this is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the above qualifications. The idea is that these vile men bear malice to all, bring corruption into society by their sinful activities of various kinds,

perpetrate many cruel acts in a callous manner, and harm others without any provocation.

'Demoniac wombs' represent all sub-human species of living beings such as the lion, the tiger, beasts, birds, insects and moths, reptiles, scorpions, dogs, crows and all other.

'Ajasram' implies that they are cast into such demoniac wombs time without number; while the use of the indeclinable

'Eva' with 'Āsuriṣu Yoniṣu' rules out higher species such as gods, manes or the possibility of their being born in human beings.

आसुरीं योनिमापन्ना मूढा जन्मनि जन्मनि ।

मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्यधमां गतिम् ॥ २० ॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; मूढा: those stupid souls; माम् Me; अप्राप्य not reaching; जन्मनि जन्मनि life after life; आसुरीम् योनिम् demoniac wombs; आपन्ना: attain; ततः (even) in comparison to them; अधमाम् गतिम् to a still lower plane; एव indeed; यान्ति sink down.

Failing to reach Me, Arjuna, these stupid souls are born life after life in demoniac wombs and then verily sink down to a still lower plane. (20)

Even though it is out of the question for such stupid souls possessing a demoniac nature to attain to a higher plane of spiritual existence, to say nothing of God-Realization,—the human soul is eligible for this consummation. Having earned this title, men who lose sight of it and embrace the demoniac nature abandoning the path leading to God-Realization in the shape of a divine disposition, are debarred from God-Realization even after attaining the golden opportunity of a human birth. This is what is implied by the words 'Mām Aprāpya'. The all-merciful Lord takes pity as it were on this plight of the human soul and thereby warns him not to forfeit the title to God-Realiza-

tion, which is a birthright with him, by embracing a demoniac disposition.

Men of this type are cast into demoniac wombs time without number and never attain a higher birth. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

The words 'Tato yānti adhamām gatim' are intended to convey that there is no end to the misery of such stupid souls. Repeated birth in demoniac wombs does not purge them of their sins and they fall into frightful hells such as Kumbhīpāka, Mahāraurava, Tāmisra and Andhatāmisra etc., which are full of untold suffering and represent a still lower condition of being.

The declaration of the Lord that men of a devilish disposition are repeatedly born in demoniac wombs and are hurled into frightful hells may lead one to enquire as to how they can escape this evil fate and attain the supreme goal. The Lord, therefore, exhorts us to give up the three evils forming part of the demoniac nature, which are mainly responsible for all evil destinies, and points out the way to attain the supreme goal.

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।

कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥ २१ ॥

कामः desire; क्रोधः anger; तथा and; लोभः greed; इदम् this; त्रिविधम् triple; नरकस्य द्वारम् gate of hell; आत्मनः of the soul; नाशनम् bringing about the ruination; तस्मात् therefore; एतत् त्रयम् all these three; त्यजेत् one should avoid.

Desire, anger and greed—this triple gate of hell brings about the ruination of the soul. Therefore, one should avoid all these three. (21)

The craving for objects of enjoyment such as wife and children is known as 'Kāma'; it is under the impulse of desire that men commit sins of various kinds, such as thieving, adultery and partaking of prohibited food. The excitement caused by the frustration of one's plans is called 'Krodha'; obsessed by anger, men resort to violence, retaliation and other sinful acts of varying description. A passionate longing for wealth and other possessions is known by the name of 'Lobha'. Avaricious men refuse to part with their money on appropriate occasions and remain engaged in acquiring and accumulating wealth even by unfair means. This involves them into sins of a major type such as lying, duplicity, thieving and perfidy etc. Sins lead to the attainment of hells like Tāmisra, Andhatāmisra and so on; that is why these three evils have been spoken of as gates of hell.

The word 'Ātmanah' stands for the Jivātmā or embodied soul. The soul, however, never perishes; hence the destruction of the soul referred to in

this verse should be taken to mean its ruination or degradation. Ever since man falls a prey to desire, anger and greed, the standard of his thoughts, feelings and conduct begins to deteriorate. Desire, anger and greed drive him to actions which ruin his body, fill his mind with evil thoughts, impair his reason, and vitiate all his activities, with the result that his life here is robbed of its joy, peace and purity and is transformed into a vale of tears, and he is cast into demoniac wombs and hells hereafter. That is why these three evils have been declared as responsible for the ruination of the soul.

When it is settled that desire, anger and greed, which are born of ignorance and are the root of all evils, are solely responsible for degradation in every form, it behoves us to eschew them altogether without delay regarding them as no less injurious than a deadly poison. This is what is meant by the words 'Tasmāt etat trayam tyajet' occurring at the end of the verse.

एतैर्विमुक्तः कौन्तेय तमोद्वारैस्त्रिभिर्नरः ।

आचरत्यात्मनः श्रेयस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ २२ ॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kunti, Arjuna; एतैः त्रिभिः तमोद्वारैः from these three gates of hell; विमुक्तः freed; नरः man; आत्मनः his own; श्रेयः salvation; आचरति works; ततः thereby; पराम् गतिम् the supreme goal; याति attains.

Freed from these three gates of hell, man works his own salvation and thereby attains the supreme goal, i. e., God. (22)

The compound word 'Tamodwārah', qualified by the adjectives 'Etaih' and 'Tribhiḥ', refers to desire, anger and greed which have been spoken of in the preceding verse as the three gates of hell. Hells like Tāmisra and Andhatāmisra

are full of darkness; they are attained as a result of vices and evil propensities which are born of the darkness of ignorance; and creatures inhabiting those regions are ever enveloped in the darkness of woe and ignorance. Hence they

are spoken of as Tamas or darkness. Desire, anger and greed—these three pave the way for these regions; hence they have been referred to as 'Tamodwāraiḥ'. He alone who is altogether free from these can strive for his spiritual uplift. And having attained a human body, he alone who works his own salvation in this way is 'man' (Narah) in the real acceptation of the term. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the

word 'Narah' in this context.

Men who are slaves of desire, anger and greed bring about their own degradation; while those who are free from these strive for their salvation. Therefore, having given up desire, anger and greed, those who cultivate in a disinterested spirit divine properties in the shape of moral virtues and good conduct as prescribed in the Śāstras are said to work for their salvation.

One may ask here: He who acts according to his own belief rather than practise divine virtues, does he attain the supreme goal or not? Anticipating this query, the Lord says:—

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।

न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥ २३ ॥

यः who; शास्त्रविधिम् the injunctions of the scriptures; उत्सृज्य having cast aside; कामकारतः according to his own sweet will; वर्तते acts (arbitrarily); सः he; न neither; सिद्धिम् perfection; अवाप्नोति attains; न nor; पराम् गतिम् the supreme goal; न nor again; सुखम् happiness.

Having cast aside the injunctions of the scriptures, he who acts in an arbitrary way according to his own sweet will neither attains perfection nor the supreme goal nor even happiness. (23)

The word 'Śāstra' covers the Vedas as well as the whole body of sacred literature based on the Vedas, viz., the Smṛtis, the Purāṇas and the Epics (the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata). It is from these scriptures or sacred books that we learn how to renounce the practices and behaviour representing the demoniac properties and to cultivate auspicious qualities and conduct forming part of the divine endowment. Flouting the injunctions of these Śāstras, which throw light on what one ought to do and what one should abstain from doing, he who is guided by his own reason and is prompted by the desire to win honour, fame and prestige etc. is said to act in an arbitrary way.

The acts of him who casts aside the injunctions of the scriptures lead to his downfall in case they are positively prohibited by the Śāstras, i. e., of a sinful character. Hence they are out of consideration here. If, on the other hand, his acts are prompted by some desire, even though approved by his own reason, they bring no reward to the doer inasmuch as they are performed in an arbitrary way and flout the injunctions of the scriptures. That is to say, far from reaching the supreme goal, he is not even able to acquire occult powers such as the ability to assume an atomic form or attain perfection in the form of paradise, nor does he enjoy the Sattvic type of happiness in this world.

The declaration made by the Lord that arbitrary acts flouting the injunctions of the Śāstras yield no fruit, may lead one to enquire as to what should be done under the circumstances. Anticipating this query the Lord says:—

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।

ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥ २४ ॥

tasmā therefore; te for you; ih kāryākāryavyavasthitau in this matter of determining what should be done and what should not be done; śāstram the scripture (alone); pramāṇam is (your) authority; jñātvā knowing (this); śāstravīdhanauktam ordained by the scriptures; karm action; krtum arhasi you ought to perform.

Therefore, the scripture alone is your guide in determining what should be done and what should not be done. Knowing this, you ought to perform only such action as is ordained by the scriptures. (24)

The Vedas and other scriptures based on them, viz., the Smṛtis, the Purāṇas and the Epics, guide us in determining what one should do and what one should abstain from doing; therefore, one should accept the authority of the Śāstras in such matters, rather than act in an arbitrary way. That is to say, one should perform only such acts as are ordained by the scriptures, and abstain from those which are prohibited by them. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

Recognizing in this way the authority of the scriptures, Arjuna is advised in the latter half of this verse to perform in the right way duties of an obligatory nature prescribed in the Śāstras, and no such actions as are prohibited by them. And such virtuous acts too as are sanctioned by the scriptures should be performed only in a disinterested spirit; for only those acts that are performed in a disinterested spirit have been declared in the Śāstras as conducive to God-Realization.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे दैवासुरसंपद्विभागयोगो
नाम षोडशोऽध्यायः ॥ १६ ॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the sixteenth chapter entitled "The Yoga of Division between the Divine and the Demoniactal Properties."





Chapter XVII

At the beginning of this chapter Arjuna enquires about the position of those who are endowed with faith. In reply to this question the Lord classifies faith into three types and points out that it is faith which determines the character of a man. Thereafter, showing the connection of faith with worship, sacrifice, austerity etc., He proclaims in the concluding verse that the actions of those who are devoid of faith are as good as not done. Since the three types of faith have thus been separately expounded in this chapter, it has been given the appellation of Śraddhātrayavibhāgayoga or the "Yoga of division of three kinds of faith".

Title of the
chapter

Summary of the
chapter

In the opening verse of this chapter Arjuna enquires of the Lord about the position of those who having cast aside the injunctions of the Śāstras worship God with faith. In reply to this question the Lord discusses in the second the three types of innate faith varying according to the three Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti; the third declares that the character of a man is determined by his faith; the fourth tells us how men possessing the Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic types of faith worship gods, demi-gods, devils and spirits respectively; the fifth and sixth decry those who practise austere penance not sanctioned by the scriptures; the seventh calls upon Arjuna to hear the different types of food, sacrifice, penance and gift; the eighth, ninth and tenth discuss the Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic types of food; the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth similarly discuss the characteristics of the Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic types of sacrifice. Describing in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth the nature of bodily austerity, austerity of speech and austerity of the mind respectively, the Lord defines the Sattvic form of austerity in the seventeenth, and the Rajasic and Tamasic forms in the eighteenth and nineteenth. The twentieth, twenty-first and twenty-second elucidate the distinctive features of the Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic forms of charity. The twenty-third glorifies the sacred words "OM TAT SAT". The twenty-fourth explains the use of the syllable "OM", the twenty-fifth that of "TAT" and the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh that of "SAT". And the chapter is concluded by proclaiming in the last or twenty-eighth verse that sacrifice, charity, austerity and other acts performed without faith bring no reward here or hereafter and are as good as not done at all.

At the beginning of Chapter XVI the Lord first of all described under the name of "divine endowment" the virtues and conduct prescribed in the Śāstras and practised in a disinterested spirit, and then discussed the demoniac properties which are discountenanced by the Śāstras. At the same time He affirmed His law of casting into hell men possessing a demoniac disposition and proclaimed that lust, anger and greed are

Link of the
Discourse

the main evils forming part of the demoniac properties and are gates of hell; renouncing these he who strives for his spiritual welfare attains the supreme goal. Thereafter He declared that having cast aside the scriptural injunctions, he who acts in an arbitrary way and does only that which is approved by his own judgment gets no reward for his actions; his efforts aiming at perfection bring him no perfection, his endeavours aiming at happiness fail to bring him happiness and attainment of the supreme goal is quite out of the question for him. Arjuna was, therefore, advised to follow in a disinterested spirit the injunctions of the Śāstras, which are competent to determine what should be done and what should not be done. While conceding that the actions of those who act in an arbitrary way flouting the scriptural injunctions yield no fruit at all, Arjuna is, however, reminded of those who reverently perform sacred acts such as worship, sacrifice and so on, even though casting aside the injunctions of the scriptures through ignorance or otherwise, and is eager to know where they stand. Giving expression to this curiosity of his, Arjuna puts the following question to the Lord:—

अर्जुन उवाच

ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।

तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः ॥ १ ॥

कृष्ण O Kṛṣṇa; ये who; शास्त्रविधिम् the injunctions of the scriptures; उत्सृज्य having cast aside; श्रद्धया with faith; अन्विताः endowed; यजन्ते worship (gods and others); तेषाम् their; निष्ठा position; तु then; का (is) what; सत्त्वम् partaking of the nature of Sattva; आहो or; रजः partaking of the nature of Rajas; तमः (or) partaking of the nature of Tamas.

Arjuna said: Those who, endowed with faith, worship gods and others casting aside the injunctions of the scriptures, where do they stand, Kṛṣṇa,—in Sattva, Rajas or Tamas? (1)

Even though the men referred to in the present verse stand on the same footing as the one mentioned in verse 23 of Chapter XVI in so far as both these types of men cast aside the scriptural injunctions, their cases no doubt differ. Verse 23 of Chapter XVI speaks of him who disdainfully flouts the injunctions of the Śāstras: while the present verse refers to those who disregard them through ignorance or want of knowledge. The former has no regard for the Śāstras; he does only that which is approved by

his own judgment. That is why he is said to act in an arbitrary way according to his own sweet will—(वर्तते कामकारतः). Those referred to in the present verse, however, are said to worship gods and others with faith (यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः); thus faith or reverence is present in them. Where there is faith, contemptuous disregard is out of the question. Knowledge of the scriptural injunctions is denied to them due to adverse circumstances and unfavourable surroundings, for want of leisure or through lack of industry and

study etc.; and it is this ignorance which is responsible for their failure to respect the injunctions of the Śāstras.

The word 'Niṣṭhā' in this verse stands for one's state or condition of being. For while answering the query of Arjuna contained in this verse, the Lord says in verse 3 below that faith constitutes the very being of man; whatever the nature of his faith, that verily he is. That is to say, his condition of being corresponds to the nature of his faith. This state or condition of one's being is known by the name 'Niṣṭhā.'

In verse 6 of Chapter XVI the Lord referred to two types of men, viz., those blessed with a divine nature and those possessing a demoniac disposition. Of these, the former perform actions enjoined by the scriptures in a disinterested spirit, and thereby attain liberation. Those possessing a demoniac disposition, again, are either Tamasic men who perpetrate sinful acts, or those who are dominated by Rajas blended with Tamas and perform noble deeds of their own liking, ignoring the scriptural injunctions. The former are born in sub-human species or cast into hells, while the latter get no reward for their noble actions. They have none the less to reap the evil consequences of their sinful deeds. While all these facts relating to those who possess a divine or demoniac disposition were thoroughly understood by Arjuna, he had some doubts about those who worship gods and others with faith, though casting aside the scriptural injunctions for want of knowledge about them. It was not clear to him whether they should be recognized as possessing a divine nature or a demoniac disposition. This is what he seeks to know by asking the question embodied in the latter half of this verse.

From the above exposition it is clear that men of this world can be classified under the following five heads:—

(1) Those who not only follow the injunctions of the Śāstras but are endowed

with faith as well;

(2) those who are lacking in faith even though they respect the scriptural injunctions to some extent;

(3) those who, though endowed with faith, are yet unable to follow the injunctions of the Śāstras;

(4) those who are neither endowed with faith nor respect the scriptural injunctions; and

(5) those who flout the scriptural injunctions in a disdainful spirit.

Now the question is, how to distinguish men belonging to each of these five groups, what is their destiny and in which particular verses of the Gītā do they find mention.

(1) In this connection it may be submitted that men belonging to the first category, viz., those who are not only endowed with faith but also follow the injunctions of the Śāstras, are again of two kinds: (i) those who perform their duties in a disinterested spirit, and (ii) those who work with an interested motive. Those Sattvic men who are blessed with the divine endowment and act in a disinterested spirit attain liberation; they are mainly referred to in the first three verses of Chapter XVI as well as in verses 11, 14, 17 and 20 of the present chapter. Those who are dominated by Rajas blended with Sattva and work with an interested motive attain supernatural powers, happiness and higher worlds such as heaven etc.; these find mention in verses 42 to 44 of Chapter II, verse 12 of Chapter IV, verses 20 to 22 of Chapter VII and verses 20, 21 and 23 of Chapter IX.

(2) Those who are lacking in faith even though they perform sacrifices and other acts and practise charity and austerity etc., following to a certain extent the injunctions of the Śāstras, get no reward for those acts, which go in vain and are of no use to them here or hereafter. These have been mentioned in verse 28 of the present chapter.

(3) Those who, though casting aside the injunctions of the Śāstras through ignorance, are yet endowed with faith are either Sattvic or Rajasic or Tamasic in character according to the nature of their faith. Their destiny too corresponds to their nature. These have been referred to in verses 2, 3 and 4 of this chapter.

(4) Those men of a demoniac disposition who neither believe in the scriptures nor possess faith and who, therefore, lead a sinful life acting on the impulse of lust, anger and greed are cast into hells or born in the lower species. These find mention in verse 15 of Chapter VII, verse 12 of Chapter IX, verses 7 to 20 of Chapter XVI and verses 5, 6 and 13 of this chapter.

(5) Those who follow their own will and do whatever is approved by their own judgment, flouting the injunctions of the

Śāstras in a disdainful spirit, are either Tamasic men who perform acts which are forbidden by the scriptures, or such as are dominated by Rajas blended with Tamas and perform noble deeds. Of these, the former are condemned to hell and other evil fate and have been referred to in sub-para 4 above; whereas the latter get no reward whatsoever inasmuch as they set at naught the injunctions of the scriptures, as has been mentioned in verse 23 of Chapter XVI. Let it be noted in this connection that sinful acts perpetrated by these men invariably lead to evil consequences such as birth in a sub-human species and tortures in hell.

The references quoted above by way of authority are by no means exhaustive; there are other verses too dealing with these five types of men. We have, however, refrained from citing all of them in this context.

The Lord vouchsafes a brief reply to Arjuna's query in the following two verses :—

श्रीभगवानुवाच

त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावजा ।

सात्त्विकी राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां शृणु ॥ २ ॥

देहिनाम् of men; सा that; स्वभावजा innate (not based on the study of scriptures); श्रद्धा faith; सात्त्विकी of a Sattvic character; च and; राजसी of a Rajasic type; च and; तामसी of a Tamasic nature; इति in this way; त्रिविधा of three kinds; एव only; भवति is; ताम् of that; शृणु hear (from Me).

Śrī Bhagavān said: That untutored innate faith of men is of three kinds—Sattvic and Rajasic and Tamasic. Hear of it from Me. (2)

The word 'Dehinām' in this verse stands for the generality of men who naturally identify themselves with their body.

The word 'Śraddhā', qualified by the adjectives 'Sā' and 'Swabhāvajā', refers to the faith existing in men who perform sacrifices and other duties in a spirit of

reverence, though casting aside the injunctions of the scriptures. Śraddhā which follows from a study of the scriptures is called 'Śāstrajā' (proceeding from a study of the scriptures); while 'Swabhāvajā' is that which is inborn and conforms to the tendencies formed as a result of one's actions in the current as well as in previous lives.

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।

श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥ ३ ॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna; सर्वस्य of all (men); श्रद्धा faith; सत्त्वानुरूपा shaped to their mental constitution; भवति is; अयम् this; पुरुषः man; श्रद्धामयः (is) constituted of faith; यः who; यच्छ्रद्धः possessing the kind of faith he does; सः he (himself); सः (is) that; एव indeed.

The faith of all men conforms to their mental constitution, Arjuna. This man consists of faith; whatever the nature of his faith, he is verily that. (3)

The pronoun 'Sarvasya' stands for those very men who regard the body as their self and have been referred to as 'Dehinām' in the preceding verse. This shows that the verse speaks of the generality of men who are identified with their body. For the Lord says in the latter half of this very verse: "Whatever the nature of faith man possesses, that verily he is." This dictum can apply only to him who regards the body as his self, and not to the man of wisdom who has transcended the three Guṇas.

Man's nature conforms to the kind of actions he performs, which are either Sattvic, Rajasic or Tamasic. And nature is imbedded in the mind; hence his frame of mind is believed to reflect his nature. Hence to call one's faith inborn is just the same as to speak of it as conforming to one's mental constitution. Thus there is no anomaly on the part of the Lord in speaking of faith as 'Swabhāvajā' at one place and as 'Sattvānurūpā' at another.

The real being of the Puruṣa or soul is beyond the Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti,

as is stated in verse 22 of Chapter XIII. The present verse, however, speaks of the Puruṣa who is seated in Prakṛti and is connected with the three Guṇas born of Prakṛti. For diversity attributable to the Guṇas is possible only in the Puruṣa who is seated in Prakṛti. Diversity due to the Guṇas is out of the question in the case of him who is beyond the three Guṇas. Hence there is no contradiction in speaking of the soul as 'Parah' (wholly beyond the three Guṇas) at one place and as 'Śraddhāmaya' at another. The Lord points out here that a man's state or condition of being corresponds to the nature of his faith, which is either Sattvic, Rajasic or Tamasic according to the frame of his mind. That is to say, the kind of faith a man possesses represents his very being. Establishing in this way the identity of faith, the state of being and the very being or self of man, the Lord answers the query of Arjuna relating to the state of being of those who worship with faith even though casting aside the injunctions of the Śāstras.

It has been stated above that a man's Niṣṭhā or state of being corresponds to his faith; this may lead one to enquire the means of ascertaining the state of being of a particular individual. Anticipating this query the Lord says:—

यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान् यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः ।

प्रेतान् भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः ॥ ४ ॥

सात्त्विकाः men of a Sattvic disposition; देवान् gods; यजन्ते worship; राजसाः men of a Rajasic temperament; यक्षरक्षांसि Yakṣas (demigods) and demons; अन्ये others; तामसाः जनाः (viz.,) men of a Tamasic disposition; प्रेतान् the spirits of the dead; च and; भूतगणान् troops of ghosts; यजन्ते worship.

Men of a Sattvic disposition worship gods; those of a Rajasic temperament worship demigods and demons; while others, who are men of a Tamasic disposition, worship the spirits of the dead and groups of ghosts. (4)

The general rule is that a man is judged by his conduct. Applying this test it can be safely assumed that the worshippers of gods, who possess a Sattvic disposition, must have a similar disposition; and according to the maxim that a worshipper bears affinity to the deity, it is stated here that the worshippers of gods are Sattvic by nature—their Niṣṭhā is of a Sattvic type. The words 'Devān' in this verse should be taken to include the sun-god, the moon-god, the god of fire, the wind-god, Indra (the lord of paradise), Varuna (the god of water), Yama (the god of judgment), the two Aświnikumāras (the twin-born physicians of gods), the Viśwedevas and other gods mentioned in the Śāstras.

Worship of gods being a Sattvic

pursuit, those who practise it have been declared as Sattvic; but perfectly Sattvic is he who takes to a Sattvic pursuit in a disinterested spirit.

Just as the worshippers of gods are Sattvic by nature, it can likewise be presumed that the worshippers of Yakṣas and demons have a Rajasic temperament, while those of ghosts, spirits and devils are Tamasic by nature.

The destiny of these worshippers varies according to the object of their worship. The worshippers of gods attain a celestial body; those of demigods and demons are reborn as demigods and demons; while the worshippers of ghosts and spirits attain the form, traits and condition etc. of ghosts and spirits. Verse 25 of Chapter IX points to the same conclusion.

The above verse speaks of those who, though casting aside the scriptural injunctions, worship different objects with an innate faith which is threefold in character; but nothing has been said about those who not only flout the injunctions of the scriptures but are also lacking in faith, and who practise austere penance etc. The question, therefore, arises: To which category do these people belong? The Lord answers this query in the following two verses.

अशास्त्रविहितं घोरं तप्यन्ते ये तपो जनाः ।

दम्भाहंकारसंयुक्ताः कामरागबलान्विताः ॥ ५ ॥

ये जनाः men who; अशास्त्रविहितम् not enjoined by the scriptures, of an arbitrary kind; घोरम् dire; तपः penance; तप्यन्ते practise; दम्भाहंकारसंयुक्ताः (are)

full of hypocrisy and egotism; कामरागबलान्विताः (and) obsessed with desire, attachment and pride of power;

Men who practise dire penance of an arbitrary type not sanctioned by the scriptures, and who are full of hypocrisy and egotism and are obsessed with desire, attachment and pride of power, (5)

The word 'Tapas', qualified by the adjectives 'Āśāstravihitam' and 'Ghoram', denotes austere penance which is not sanctioned by the scriptures, which does not conform to the scriptural injunctions, which seeks to mortify the body and the senses through pretentious displays of various kinds and which is dreadful to look at.

Those who perform such dire penances discountenanced by the scriptures are lacking in faith. They set up a fine show in order to impress and cheat others

and are ever puffed up with pride. That is why they have been spoken of as 'Dambhāhankārasaṃyuktāḥ'.

These people are deeply attached to worldly enjoyments; the result is that their thirst for those enjoyments is ever on the increase. They believe that they will secure whatever they seek, and that they possess infinite strength which is sufficient to foil all attempts to interfere with their plans. This is what the Lord seeks to convey by calling such people 'Kāmarāgabalanvitāḥ'.

कर्शयन्तः शरीरस्थं भूतग्राममचेतसः ।

मां चैवान्तःशरीरस्थं तान् विद्वद्वासुरनिश्चयान् ॥ ६ ॥

शरीरस्थम् constituting their body; भूतग्रामम् the elements; च and; अन्तः-शरीरस्थम् dwelling in the heart; माम् Me (the supreme Spirit); एव also; कर्शयन्तः emaciating; तान् those; अचेतसः senseless people; आसुरनिश्चयान् having a demoniac disposition; विद्धि know.

And who emaciate the elements constituting their body as well as Me, the supreme Spirit, dwelling in their heart,—know these senseless people to have a demoniac disposition. (6)

The compound word 'Bhūtagrāmam' stands here for the aggregate of twenty-three categories, viz., the five gross elements, mind, intellect, ego, the ten organs of perception and action and the five objects of senses, which have already been mentioned in XIII. 5 under the name of Kṣetra.

Those who perform dire penance of an arbitrary type not sanctioned by the scriptures not only emaciate and weaken their psycho-physical organism, which is nothing but a conglomeration of the twenty-three elements enumerated above,

but also torment God dwelling within their heart by their dreadful pursuits. For God is seated in the heart of all as their very Self. Hence to torment one's own self or the self of others is to torment God Himself. It is in this sense that these people are said to torment the elements as well as God.

The word 'Achetasaḥ' refers to those stupid men who violate the injunctions of the Śāstras and are lacking in intelligence, and whose intellect is clouded.

Having pointed out the marks of those who are endowed with faith of a threefold character as well as of those who perform dire penance, the Lord now undertakes to classify food, sacrifice, penance and charity under three heads, viz., Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic, in order that one may choose the Sattvic type and reject the Rajasic and Tamasic ones.

आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः ।

यज्ञस्तपस्तथा दानं तेषां भेदमिमं शृणु ॥ ७ ॥

आहारः food; अपि as well; सर्वस्य to all (according to their innate disposition); त्रिविधः of three kinds; प्रियः agreeable; भवति is; तु and; तथा even so; यज्ञः sacrifice; तपः penance; दानम् (and) charity (too); तेषाम् their; इमम् this; भेदम् distinction; शृणु hear (from Me).

Food also, which is agreeable to different men according to their innate disposition, is of three kinds. And likewise sacrifice, penance and charity too are of three kinds each; hear their distinction as follows. (7)

The use of the indeclinable 'Api' after 'Āhārah' shows that just as faith and worship have been divided under three heads, viz., Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic, even so food also is of three kinds.

The pronoun 'Sarvasya' stands for the whole human race; for food is taken by all men and it is human beings who form the subject of discussion in this chapter.

The constitution of a man's mind is determined by the kind of food he takes and, as has been stated in verse 3 above, a man's faith corresponds to his mental constitution. If a man's diet is pure, his mind too will be pure as a matter of course. "Purity of mind follows from purity of diet."* (*Chhândogya Upaniṣad* VII. xxvi. 2.) And purity of thought and feelings, of faith and other qualities, and even so of actions too depends on purity of mind. It was therefore that the Lord thought it necessary to discuss the subject of food in this connection even without

any reference from Arjuna. Besides, while worship of gods and others is not universally practised, food is a thing which concerns all. Just as a man is believed to have a Sattvic, Rajasic or Tamasic disposition according as he worships gods who are Sattvic by nature, demigods and demons who have a Rajasic temperament, or ghosts and spirits who have a Tamasic disposition, even so of the Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic types of food, the one which is dear to him determines the mode of Prakṛti by which he is dominated. It is this idea which has been particularly emphasized by the use of the adjective 'Priyah'. Hence a man can as well be judged by the nature of his diet. It is for this reason that the Lord declares food to be of three kinds in this verse. His further motive in doing so was to help people choose the Sattvic type and reject the Rajasic and Tamasic ones. What is true of food should be understood to hold good in the case of sacrifice, charity and penance as well.

* आहारशुद्धौ सत्त्वशुद्धिः ।

In the above verse the Lord invited Arjuna to hear the classification of food, sacrifices, penance and charity. Accordingly He proceeds to describe in the following verse the Sattvic types of food, which are worth taking.

आयुःसत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।

रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ॥ ८ ॥

आयुःसत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः promoting longevity, intelligence, vigour, health, happiness and cheerfulness; रस्याः sweet; स्निग्धाः bland; स्थिराः sustaining; हृद्याः naturally agreeable; आहाराः foods, *i.e.*, edibles; सात्त्विकप्रियाः (are) dear to the Sattvic type of men.

Foods which promote longevity, intelligence, vigour, health, happiness and cheerfulness, and which are sweet, bland, substantial and naturally agreeable, are dear to the Sattvic type of men. (8)

(1) 'Āyuh' means life; foods which augment vitality and thereby prolong one's life are called 'Āyurvivardhanāḥ'.

(2) The word 'Sattva' here stands for the intellect. Foods which tend to make one's intellect pure or transparent, sharp, accurate and subtle are said to be 'Sattvavivardhanāḥ'.

(3) Bodily and mental vigour, which contributes to one's success in a noble enterprise is called 'Bala'. Foods which augment this inner and outer strength or energy are referred to here as 'Balavivardhanāḥ'.

(4) Foods which serve as a natural antidote for one's mental and physical ailments are called 'Ārogyavivardhanāḥ'.

(5) When there is a feeling of contentment, Sattvic delight and freshness in the heart and when signs of joy born of a guileless heart are visible on one's face and other limbs of the body, one is said to be happy. Foods which promote such happiness are called 'Sukhavivardhanāḥ'.

(6) Amiability of disposition and a pleasing look on the face and other parts of the body is what is referred to

here as 'Pṛiti'. And foods which enhance this Pṛiti are called 'Pṛitivivardhanāḥ'.

The compound adjective 'Āyuhṣatvabalārogyasukhapṛitivivardhanāḥ' thus covers all articles of food of a Sattvic type, such as milk, clarified butter, vegetables, fruits, sugar, wheat, barley, grams and rice etc.

The adjectives 'Rasyāḥ', 'Snigdḥāḥ', 'Sthirāḥ' and 'Hṛdyāḥ' are intended to distinguish such articles from those of a non-Sattvic character.

(1) Milk, sugar and other substances having a sweet flavour are referred to here as 'Rasyāḥ'.

(2) Clarified and unclarified butter, oils extracted from Sattvic substances and other fatty products are called 'Snigdḥāḥ'.

(3) Foods which sustain the body for a long time and give strength are spoken of as 'Sthirāḥ'.

(4) Foods which are not made of foul or impure substances and excite a Sattvic appetite on their very sight are known as 'Hṛdyāḥ'.

Edibles of four kinds, viz., Bhakṣya (those which have to be chewed before

they can be swallowed), Bhojya (those which are directly swallowed), Lehya (those which are licked) and Choşya (those which are sucked) are referred to here as 'Āhārāḥ'. The subject has been fully dealt with in the commentary on verse 14 of Chapter XV, which speaks of these four kinds of food under the name of 'Chaturvidham Annam'.

Even though the Lord undertook in the preceding verse to classify food under three heads, viz., Sattvic, Rajasic and

Tamasic. He has thought fit to mention here foods that are dear to men of a Sattvic disposition, rather than those which are Sattvic themselves. The reason is not far to seek. A man loves that very food which partakes of the Guṇa predominant in him. Hence when we talk of foods which are liked by men of a particular disposition, we indirectly mention the class to which such foods belong. This indirect method has been employed in order to show that the disposition of a man can be judged by the kind of food he loves.

Having mentioned the diet of Sattvic men, which deserves to be adopted by all, the Lord now describes in the following two verses the diet of Rajasic and Tamasic men, which should be shunned by all.

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः ।

आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ॥ ९ ॥

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः bitter, acid, salty, overhot, pungent, dry and burning; दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः causing suffering, grief and sickness; आहाराः foods; राजसस्य to a man of Rajasic temperament; इष्टाः (are) dear.

Foods which are bitter, acid, salty, overhot, pungent, dry and burning, and which cause suffering, grief and sickness, are dear to the Rajasic type of men. (9)

Neem and Karela etc. fall under the category of bitter foods. Some interpret the word 'Kaṭu' as pungent and include pepper etc. in this class. But the separate mention of the word 'Tikṣṇa', which evidently stands for pungent foods, justifies our construing the word 'Kaṭu' as bitter. Tamarind and lemon etc. may be classed as acid foods; alkalis and salts of various kinds are included in salty foods; foods which are taken while they are yet steaming are classed as overhot; chillies etc. are typical pungent foods; parched grains may serve as examples of dry foods and mustard seeds etc. may be taken to represent burning foods. The pain which is experienced in the throat etc. at the time of taking such

foods, the burning sensation felt in the tongue, palate etc., the acidity of teeth, the difficulty experienced in chewing articles, the watering of eyes and nose, hiccup etc.—all these are included in the suffering which such foods are known to entail. The sense of remorse one feels after taking such foods is referred to here as Śoka or grief, and the distemper caused by them is spoken of as Āmāya or disease. The foods mentioned above bring all these in their wake. Hence they have been called 'Duḥkhaśokāmaya-pradāḥ', and hence they should be discarded.

The use of the compound adjective 'Rājasaṃpriyāḥ' with reference to 'Āhārāḥ'

is intended to convey that such foods like such foods should be classed as are of a Rajasic type. Hence those who Rajasic men.

यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत् ।

उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥ १० ॥

यत् which (is); यातयामम् half-cooked; गतरसम् insipid; पूति putrid; पर्युषितम् stale; च and; उच्छिष्टम् polluted; च and; अमेध्यम् (which is) impure; अपि too; भोजनम् (that) food; तामसप्रियम् (is) dear to Tamasic men.

Food which is half-cooked or half-ripe, insipid, putrid, stale and polluted, and which is impure too, is dear to men of a Tamasic disposition. (10)

Etymologically speaking, 'Yātayāmam' means that which was cooked three hours before. But the separate mention of 'Paryuṣitam' (stale food) as falling under the category of Tamasic food precludes such interpretation. If 'Yātayāmam' is taken to mean that which was cooked only three hours before, there is no meaning in including stale food in the category of Tamasic food. For when food cooked only three hours before is branded as Tamasic, that which has stayed overnight is all the more so, so that there was no need to mention it separately. It is for this reason that 'Yātayāmam' has been interpreted as half-cooked or half-ripe. Nevertheless, if anyone insists on interpreting it as cooked three hours before, there is no objection either.

A juicy substance (e. g., an orange or sugarcane) which has lost its succulent character due to exposure or contact with fire etc., or on account of its being out of season, is called 'Gatarasam'.

Putrid foods are those which contain a naturally offensive smell (e. g., onion, garlic etc.) or which are rendered foul through fermentation on any other chemical process.

Food which was cooked the day before is called 'Paryuṣita' or stale. Foods which are allowed to stay overnight get spoiled and give rise to many diseases in case one chooses to partake of them.

Fruits also which were plucked long ago and have accordingly been spoiled should be regarded as stale.

Food which is left on one's dish after one has partaken of it is called 'Uchhiṣṭa'.

Animal foods involving destruction of life, such as meat, eggs etc., and prohibited intoxicants such as spirituous liquor, toddy etc.,—which are impure by their very nature or which have been polluted by evil association of any kind,—through contact with any impure substance, spot, utensil or person, or because of their connection with foul money earned by unfair or unrighteous means—all these are included in the category of impure food. The use of such articles has been banned even in the worship of gods.

The use of the particles 'Cha' and 'Api' is intended to convey that besides those articles which suffer from the above defects in a large or small measure, hemp drugs (Ganja and Bhang), tobacco, cigarettes and Bidis, extracts, distilled spirits, impure medicines and all other articles which give rise to Tamogūṇa are Tamasic in character.

By speaking of such food as dear to men of a Tamasic disposition the Lord indirectly pronounces it to be Tamasic in character; and the fact that they like such food is indicative of their Tamasic disposition.

Having thus pointed out the three divisions of food, the Lord now proceeds to classify sacrifices under three heads. Out of these, He first of all gives below the characteristics of a Sattvic Yajña, which is worth performing.

अफलाकाङ्क्षिमिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते ।

यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः ॥ ११ ॥

यः which; विधिदृष्टः ordained by scriptural injunctions; यज्ञः sacrifice; यष्टव्यम् एव sacrifices must be performed; इति thus; मनः the mind; समाधाय satisfying; अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिः by those who expect no return; इज्यते is offered; सः that; सात्त्विकः (is) Sattvic in character.

The sacrifice which is offered, as ordained by scriptural injunctions, by men who expect no return and who believe that such sacrifices must be performed, is Sattvic in character. (11)

The use of the compound adjective 'Vidhidṛṣṭaḥ' with 'Yajñāḥ' is intended to convey that of the many sacrifices enjoined by the Vedas, as well as of those enjoined by the Smṛti texts that alone which is prescribed in the Śāstras as binding on a particular Varna (grade in society) or Āśrama (stage in life) is Sattvic in character. A sacrifice which is performed in an arbitrary way contrary to the scriptures is not Sattvic.

Pouring oblations of clarified butter etc. into the sacred fire for the propitiation of gods and others, or duly worshipping anyone in any other form by offering him anything whatsoever is what is spoken of as 'Yajña'.

Again, he who takes into his head that no incentive to work is left for the man who does not expect any return for his work, will never undertake any sacrifice in a disinterested spirit. Therefore, that sacrifice alone is Sattvic, which

is undertaken in a disinterested spirit with the firm belief that a man must perform the sacrifice which the Śāstras prescribe for him with due regard to his Varna (grade in society) and Āśrama (stage in life), and that failure to perform such a sacrifice, is to disobey the commandment of God. This is what is meant by the latter half of this verse.

The compound word 'Aphalākāṅkṣibhiḥ' stands for those who expect no return for their sacrifice in the shape of wife, progeny, wealth, house, honour, fame, prestige, victory, heavenly bliss or any other enjoyment of this world or the next or the eradication of any evil or suffering (*vide* VI. 1). A sacrifice which is undertaken with an interested motive cannot be wholly Sattvic even if it is performed in accordance with the scriptural injunctions; indifference to its fruit is supremely essential for investing it with a wholly Sattvic character.

The Lord now describes the characteristics of a Rajasic sacrifice.

अभिसंधाय तु फलं दम्भार्थमपि चैव यत् ।

इज्यते भरतध्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम् ॥ १२ ॥

तु but; भरतश्रेष्ठ O best of Bharatas, Arjuna; दम्भार्थम् एव for the sake of mere show; च or; फलम् the fruit; अपि even; अभिसंधाय keeping in view; यत् which; इज्यते is offered; तम् that; यज्ञम् sacrifice; राजसम् of the Rajasic type; विद्धि know.

That sacrifice, however, which is offered for the sake of mere show or even with an eye to its fruit, know it to be Rajasic, Arjuna. (12)

The disjunctive particle 'Tu' is intended to distinguish the Rajasic type of sacrifices from the Sattvictype mentioned in the preceding verse.

A sacrifice which is undertaken with a view to establishing one's reputation as one devoted to sacrifices, even though one has no faith in sacrificial performances, is said to be undertaken for mere show.

Again, a sacrifice which is performed for securing a wife, progeny, wealth, house, honour, fame, prestige, victory, heavenly bliss or any other enjoyment of

A sacrifice which has been undertaken with an interested motive is Rajasic in character even if it is enjoined by the scriptures and has been performed with reverence; even so that which is undertaken for the sake of mere show is equally Rajasic. That which suffers from both these defects is, therefore, much more so. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the particles 'Eva', 'Api' and 'Cha' in the first half of this verse.

The Lord now proceeds to describe the characteristics of a Tamasic sacrifice, which is wholly worth abstaining from.

विधिहीनमसृष्टान्नं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम् ।
श्रद्धाविरहितं यन्नं तामसं परिचक्षते ॥ १३ ॥

विधिहीनम् without regard for the scriptural injunctions; असृष्टान्नम् in which no food is offered; मन्त्रहीनम् without sacred chant; अदक्षिणम् without sacrificial fees; श्रद्धाविरहितम् devoid of faith; यज्ञम् sacrifice; तामसम् of the Tamasic type; परिचक्षते they call.

A sacrifice which has no respect for scriptural injunctions, in which no food is offered, and no sacrificial fees are paid, which is without sacred chant and devoid of faith, is said to be Tamasic. (13)

'Vidhihina' is that which is not enjoined by the Śāstras or in which there is no respect for the scriptural injunctions or which has been performed in an arbitrary way setting aside the injunctions of the scriptures,

'Asṛṣṭānnaṃ' is that in which there is no feeding of Brahmans and no gifts of food.

'Mantrahinaṃ' is that in which there is no sacred chant as enjoined by the

scriptures,—in which either no sacred formulas have been employed at all or they have not been employed in accordance with the scriptural injunctions, or in which such formulas have been occasionally omitted for want of respect for them.

'Adakṣiṇam' is that in which no

sacrificial fees have been paid to the officiating priests and no gifts made to other Brahmans.

Lastly, 'Śraddhāviraḥitam' is that which is actuated by self-conceit, arrogance, delusion, hypocrisy and egotism etc., and is marked by lack of reverence.

Having thus described the characteristics of the threefold Yajña, the Lord now takes up the subject of Tapas, and in order to point out the characteristics of Sattvic penance in the following four verses, first discusses the nature of bodily penance.

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं

शौचमार्जवम् ।

ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शरीरं तप उच्यते ॥ १४ ॥

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनम् worship of gods, the Brahmans, one's elders and wise men; शौचम् purity; मार्जवम् straightness; ब्रह्मचर्यम् continence; च and; अहिंसा harmlessness; शरीरम् bodily; तपः penance; उच्यते is called.

Worship of gods, the Brahmans, one's elders and wise men, purity, straightness, continence and harmlessness—this is called bodily penance. (14)

The word 'Deva' stands here for Brahmā (the Creator), Śiva (the god of destruction), the sun-god, the moon-god, Durgā (Śiva's Consort), Agni (the god of fire), Varuṇa (the god presiding over waters), Yama (the god of judgment), Indra (the lord of paradise) and all other gods mentioned in the Śāstras—whose worship has been enjoined in the Śāstras. The word 'Dwija', though denoting in its wider application all the three higher castes, viz., the Brahman, (the priestly class), the Kṣatriya (the warrior class) and the Vaiśya (the trading class), stands exclusively for the Brahman; for the latter alone is an object of worship for all. The word 'Guru' in this verse covers one's parents, preceptor, aged folk and these who are superior in Varṇa (grade in society), Āśrama (stage in life) and age etc. And the word 'Prājña' denotes saintly and wise men who possess adequate knowledge of God. Treating all these with due respect and

attention, bowing to them, prostrating oneself at their feet, washing their feet, offering them sandal-paste, flowers, incense, light, food etc., rendering them appropriate services etc. and making reasonable attempts to gratify them—all these are included in their worship.

The word 'Śauca' has been used here in the restricted sense of mere external purity. For purity of speech has been mentioned separately in verse 15 and purity of mind in verse 16 below. 'Śauca' consists in cleaning one's body with water, earth etc. and keeping all one's bodily activities pure (XVI. 3).

'Ārjava' means straightness. Having been mentioned as a part of bodily penance, it signifies absence of crookedness in the form of stiffness and twisting of the body.

'Brahmacharya' consists in abstaining from sexual commerce in all its bodily forms and carefully preserving one's seminal fluid,

'Ahimsā' means taking a vow never to inflict with one's body the least suffering in any form on any creature whatsoever.

The above virtues and practices are mainly connected with the body, or in other words, the body plays the principal part in them; and they wash away all the impurities of the body and the senses and purify them. Hence they are known as bodily penance.

The Lord now proceeds to describe the austerity of speech.

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ।

स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥ १५ ॥

यत् which (is); अनुद्वेगकरम् causing no annoyance; प्रियहितम् agreeable and wholesome; च and; सत्यम् truthful; वाक्यम् speech; च and; स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनम् study of the Vedas and other Śāstras and the practice of Nāma-Japa or repetition of the Divine Name; एव verily; वाङ्मयम् तपः the austerity of speech; उच्यते is called.

Words which cause no annoyance to others and are truthful, agreeable and wholesome, as well as the study of the Vedas and other Śāstras and the practice of repetition of the Divine Name—this is known as the austerity of speech.

(15)

Words which cause no annoyance to others and are absolutely untainted by calumny and slander etc. are called 'Anudvegakara'. Similarly, truthful words are those which state the bare truth in order to convey to others a correct idea of what one has actually seen, heard or experienced. Loving, sweet, artless and gentle words, which are pleasing to hear and are altogether free from acerbity, pungency, coldness, sarcasm, insolence and other faults, are known as 'Priya'. And words which are ultimately beneficial to all, which are altogether free from violence, malice, jealousy and animosity, and are full of love, compassion and good wishes are called 'Hita'.

The uttering of only such words as combine in themselves all the four virtues, viz., unoffensiveness, veracity, agreeability and wholesomeness, and are free from all impurities of speech mentioned in the

Śāstras, can be recognized as the austerity of speech; words which have the least tinge of these impurities and lack in any of the aforesaid virtues do not fall under the category of complete austerity of speech. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the particle 'Cha' after 'Priyahitam'.

Reciting the Vedas and their auxiliaries viz., works on grammar, phonetics etc., the Smṛti texts, the Purāṇas and Stotras or panegyrics to God etc. according to one's qualifications, uttering the praises, glory and names of God and offering prayers etc. to God—all these are included in 'Swādhyāyābhyasanam'.

All the above virtues and practices are connected with speech; they eradicate all the impurities of speech and purify it along with the mind; hence they have been spoken of as the austerity of speech.

The Lord now tells us what is austerity of the mind.

मनःप्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः ।

भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्तपो मानसमुच्यते ॥ १६ ॥

मनःप्रसादः cheerfulness of mind; सौम्यत्वम् placidity; मौनम् habit of contemplation on God; आत्मविनिग्रहः control of the mind; भावसंशुद्धिः perfect purity of inner feelings; इति एतत् all this; मानसम् तपः austerity of the mind; उच्यते is known as.

Cheerfulness of mind, placidity, habit of contemplation on God, control of the mind and perfect purity of inner feelings—all this is called austerity of the mind. (16)

'Manah-prasādah' means purity and cheerfulness of mind. In other words, when the mind is freed from morbidities like dejection and fear, anxiety and grief, agony and perturbation etc., and is filled with light and vivacity, it is said to be cheerful.

Complete absence of such afflicting morbidities as coldness, jealousy, violence, vindictiveness, ferocity, ruthlessness etc. and the constant placidity and coolness of the mind is known as 'Saumyatvam'.

'Maunam' means the constant application of the mind to the thought of the virtues, glory, truth, essential character, sports and names etc. of God or to an enquiry about Brahma or the Absolute.

When the restlessness of the mind totally disappears and it gets steady and

thoroughly disciplined, it is said to be controlled. This is what is known as 'Ātmavinigrahaḥ'.

'Bhāvasamśuddhi' means the complete elimination from the mind of evil propensities like partiality and prejudice, lust and anger, greed and infatuation, arrogance and malice, jealousy and animosity, scorn and contumely, envy and intolerance, obstinate error and idle thought, aversion to what is desirable and contemplating what is unwelcome, on the one hand, and the constant blossoming of virtues like forbearance, love, politeness etc., on the other.

All the virtues mentioned in this verse are connected with the mind, and eradicating all its impurities purify it; hence they have been spoken of as the austerity of the mind.

The Lord now defines Sattvic penance.

श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्तत्त्रिविधं नरैः ।

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्युक्तैः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते ॥ १७ ॥

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिः expecting no return; युक्तैः नरैः by self-disciplined men; परया श्रद्धया with supreme faith; तप्तम् practised; तत् that, above-mentioned; त्रिविधम् threefold; तपः penance; सात्त्विकम् Sattvic; परिचक्षते (they) call.

This threefold penance performed with supreme faith by Yogis expecting no return is called Sattvic. (17)

'Aphalākāṅkṣī' is he who never and on no account entertains the least craving for any return whatsoever in the shape of enjoyments of this world or the next or the cessation of suffering; and he whose mind, intellect and senses, being

disciplined and untainted, can never be excited by enjoyment of any kind whatsoever, and who is entirely free from attachment, is called 'Yukta'. Thus demonstrating by the use of the above two epithets the need of a disinterested spirit, the Lord thereby shows that the threefold penance described in the above three verses assumes a wholly Sattvic character only when it is performed by such disinterested persons.

Consummate and reverent faith in the value, glory and essential character of the above-mentioned threefold penance, as depicted in the Śāstras,—a faith which is more living than what we have in things which are open to perception,—is called 'supreme faith'. And the aforesaid penance, when it is performed with exceptional reverence and zeal, remaining

unshaken under all circumstances and minding not in the least the greatest obstacles or hardships, is spoken of as 'Śraddhayā parayā taptam'.

The use of the adjectives 'Tat' and 'Trividham' with 'Tapah' is intended to convey that the threefold penance relating to the body, speech and mind, mentioned in the preceding three verses alone, can be Sattvic in character. Other forms of penance, such as those referred to in verse 5 of this very chapter as 'not sanctioned by the scriptures' (Aśāstra-vihitam) and 'dreadful' (Ghoram), are never Sattvic. It further shows that although the forms of penance enumerated in verses 14, 15 and 16 above are Sattvic in character, they are wholly Sattvic only when they are performed in the spirit indicated in the present verse.

The Lord now defines the Rajasic type of penance.

सत्कारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चैव यत् ।

क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चलमध्रुवम् ॥ १८ ॥

यत् तपः the penance which ; सत्कारमानपूजार्थम् for the sake of renown, honour and worship ; च as well as ; एव for any other selfish gain ; दम्भेन (either in all sincerity or) by way of ostentation ; क्रियते is performed ; तत् that ; अध्रुवम् चलम् yielding an uncertain (and) momentary fruit ; इह here ; राजसम् (as) Rajasic in character ; प्रोक्तम् has been spoken of.

The penance which is performed for the sake of renown, honour and worship as well as for any other selfish gain either in all sincerity or by way of ostentation, and yields an uncertain and momentary fruit, has been spoken of here as Rajasic. (18)

The use of the adjective 'Yat' with 'Tapas' is intended to convey that whatever penances have been mentioned in the Śāstras in the form of sacred vows, fasts and self-discipline fall under the category of Rajasic penance if they are performed with some interested motive.

The reputation that one gains in the

world, through publicity given to one's austerities, as an ascetic of a very high order unequalled in penance and a man of supreme excellence is called 'Satkāra.' 'Māna' consists in welcoming a man as an ascetic, rising before him, bowing to him, presenting him with an address or showing respect to him through any other gesture. And waving lights before him, washing

his feet, offering him leaves and flowers and other recognized forms of worship, and carrying out his behests—all these are known by the name of 'Pūjā.'

The use of the particles 'Cha' and 'Eva' in the first half of this verse is intended to show that austerity practised for attaining any other selfish end is also included in the category of Rajasic penance.

Austerity, whether of a profane or sacred character, which is practised for mere ostentation, assuming the guise of an ascetic with a view to gaining any selfish end through fraudulence, even though one has no real faith in penance,—

this is what is known as practising austerity through 'Dambha.'

It should be noted in this connection that a selfish motive alone brings down austerity to the Rajasic level; it is much more so if it is accompanied with ostentation.

There is no surety about our gaining the object sought through such penance; hence such austerity has been declared as 'Adhruva'; and it has been spoken of as 'Chala' because whatever return we get for such penance does not last forever, it is bound to perish.

The Lord now defines penance of the Tamasic type, which is altogether worth abstaining from.

मूढग्राहेणात्मनो यत्पीडया क्रियते तपः ।

परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ १९ ॥

यत् तपः the penance which; मूढग्राहेण through perversity; आत्मनः पीडया (accompanied) with self-mortification; वा or; परस्य उत्सादनार्थम् for harming another; क्रियते is performed; तत् that; तामसम् Tamasic (in character); उदाहृतम् has been declared to be.

Austerity which is practised through perversity and is accompanied with self-mortification or is intended to harm others, such austerity has been declared as Tamasic. (19)

The word 'Tāmasam' in this verse refers to the type of penance mentioned in verses 5 and 6 of this chapter, which is not sanctioned by the scriptures but is conceived by one's own mind and which is characterized by dreadful acts of self-mortification, such as tying one's feet to the bough of a tree and hanging with one's head downwards, sitting on iron spikes and so on, performed with some evil intent either by way of ostentation or through ignorance. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the adjective 'Yat' with 'Tapah'.

Obstinately clinging to any practice whatsoever as an act of penance without knowing the true characteristics of austerity is called 'Mūḍhagrāha'. And undertaking with such obstinacy, as an act of penance, a Tamasic practice characterized by mortification of one's body, speech and mind,—this is what is meant by performing a penance through perversity.

The word 'Ātmanah' in this verse stands for one's mind, speech and body; and their mortification is referred to.

here as 'Ātmanah Pīḍayā'. Therefore, an act of penance which is not sanctioned by the scriptures and subjects one's mind etc. or any of them to undue hardships is said to be accompanied by self-mortification.

Mortifying one's mind, speech and body with intent to usurp or destroy others'.

property, exterminate their family line or harm them in any way,—this is what is called 'Parasyotsādanārtham Tapah'.

The use of the particle 'Vā' is intended to convey that an act of penance which has any of these characteristics is Tamasic in character.

Having defined the three kinds of penance, the Lord now proceeds to mention the threefold division of charity and with this end in view defines the Sattvic type first.

दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे ।

देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् ॥ २० ॥

दातव्यम् it is one's duty to give; इति with this idea; यद् दानम् a gift which; देशे in a fit place; च and; काले at a suitable time; च and (also); पात्रे on the appearance of a deserving person; अनुपकारिणे on one who is no benefactor; दीयते is bestowed; तद् दानम् that gift; सात्त्विकम् (as) Sattvic; स्मृतम् has been pronounced.

A gift which is bestowed with a sense of duty on one who is no benefactor when a fit place, suitable time and a deserving person are available, that gift has been pronounced as Sattvic. (20)

Showing by the use of the words 'Dātavyam iti' that a disinterested spirit is essential for the full development of Sattvaguna, the Lord tells us in this verse that it is man's paramount duty to bestow gifts, enjoined by the scriptures, with due regard to his grade in society, stage in life, condition and circumstances to devote his possessions to the good of others to the best of his ability. Failing to do so he falls from the human state and flouts the blessed commandment of God. Therefore, that gift alone is wholly Sattvic in character, which is bestowed with a pure sense of duty without expecting any return either here or hereafter.

Only that place and time are fit and suitable for gratifying others through the gift of a particular object, at which that object is particularly

needed. For instance, that place and time alone are fit and suitable for the gift of food and water, which are marked by the prevalence of famine or draught—no matter if that place is no place of pilgrimage and that time has no special religious significance. Besides these, ordinarily speaking, Kurukṣetra, Haridwar, Mathura, Kashi, Prayag, Naimisharanya and other sacred places, and all sacred occasions such as the solar and lunar eclipses, the full moon and new moon, Sankrānti (the passage of the sun from one zodiacal sign to another), Ekādaśī (the eleventh day of every dark and bright fortnight)—which have been commended in the Śāstras for charity—are suitable places and occasions. The words 'Deśe' and 'Kāle' in this verse refer to all these places and occasions.

He who is in need of a particular

object at a particular place and time is a 'Pātra' or fit person to receive a gift of that object at that very place and time. For instance, all living beings who are hungry, thirsty, naked, poor, sick, afflicted, forlorn and terror-stricken are worthy of receiving gifts of food, water, cloth, wherewithal to make both ends meet, medicine, consolation, shelter and assurance of safety respectively. The fitness of afflicted creatures is not qualified by considerations of caste, nationality or time. Their affliction alone is a test of their fitness. Besides these, learned Brahmins of excellent conduct, ideal Brahmachāris or religious students, Vānaprasthas or hermits living in a forest and Sannyāsīs or recluses who have renounced the world, and those who have taken a vow of service are fit to receive, according to their respective qualifications, gifts of money and other articles which are within the means of the donor and have been recommended for them by the Śāstras.

It is certainly obligatory to render good offices to, and try to gratify to one's level best, those to whom one owes a debt of gratitude. Nay, men of a noble disposition cannot help obliging their benefactor. They know that an attempt to return a true obligation is to under-value it; for a real obligation cannot be repaid at all. Hence they render good offices to him only for their own satisfaction; and whatever they do appears

inadequate to them. They remain overwhelmed with gratitude. In *Śrī Rāma-charitāmāsa* of Goswami Tulasidas, Bhagavān Śrī Rāma says to His devotee Hanumān:—

"O monkey-god, there is none among celestials, human beings and sages, who has rendered such valuable services to Me as yourself. How should I requite your services ? My mind is unable even to stand your looks."

In *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa proclaims His indebtedness to the cowherd damsels of Vraja. Under such circumstances, offering anything to a benefactor can never be unjustifiable or a Rajasic act; of course, it does not come within the purview of 'Dāna' or charity. It is rather a natural gesture expressive of one's gratitude. Those who regard it as an act of charity really offer insult to the benefactor; while those who are unwilling to oblige a benefactor belong to the category of ungrateful creatures. Hence one must render good offices to one's benefactor.

By insisting that a gift should be bestowed on one who is not a benefactor the Lord seeks to convey that a donor should not expect the least return from the donee or recipient of the gift. That gift alone is Sattvic, which is bestowed on him in whom one has no selfish interest. As a matter of fact, the Lord thereby simply warns the donor against entertaining a selfish motive.

The Lord now defines a Rajasic gift.

यत् प्रत्युपकारार्थं फलमुद्दिश्य वा पुनः ।

दीयते च परिक्लिष्टं तद्दानं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥ २१ ॥

तु however; यत् which; परिक्लिष्टम् in a grudging spirit; च and; प्रत्युपकारार्थम् for getting a service in return; वा or; फलम् a reward; उद्दिश्य expecting; पुनः then; दीयते is given; तत् that; दानम् gift; राजसम् Rajasic (in character); स्मृतम् has been proclaimed.

A gift which is bestowed in a grudging spirit and with the object of getting a service in return or in the hope of obtaining a reward, is called Rajasic. (21)

The disjunctive particle 'Tu' in this verse is intended to distinguish the Rajasic from the Sattvic type of gifts.

A donation which is given in a reluctant and helpless mood under threat or coercion, due to pressure exerted by respectable and influential men, in response to an importunity or with a covert feeling of discomfiture and sorrow, is said to have been given in a grudging spirit.

A gift bestowed on someone who is of permanent utility or who is expected or calculated to render some useful service, great or small, later on, is no true gift, really speaking; that is something like a sum advanced to ensure a service. For instance, on sacred occasions like a Somayati Amāvasyā (the last day of a dark fortnight synchronizing with a monday, which is a rare phenomenon) it is customary these days to bestow a gift on such Brahmans as are useful to ourselves or to our friends or relatives, and who are expected to render some service in future, or to donate a sum to institutions or organizers of institutions who are expected in return to serve our ends in ways more than one. This is what is meant by bestowing a gift with the object of getting a service in return.

Similarly a gift which is bestowed on an individual or institution with the object of gaining honour, fame, prestige

and enjoyments, either of this world or the next, or for curing some disease, is said to have been given in the hope of obtaining a reward. Some people seek to derive a number of benefits all at once from a single gift; e.g., they anticipate that:—

(a) The donee or recipient of the gift will feel obliged and will take sides with them in a good or evil cause when the time comes for it;

(b) They will gain reputation, which will add to their prestige and bring honour to them;

(c) Publicity through the press will create an impression on the minds of the general public that the donors are very rich; this will give them a number of advantages in business and they will be able to make maximum profits;

(d) Good reputation will enable them to secure high connections for their sons and daughters, which will serve a number of their ends.

(e) Their gift as a matter of course will yield in the next world the maximum return promised in the Śāstras.

Calculations of this kind detract much from the value of a gift.

The use of the particles 'Vā', 'Punah' and 'Cha' is intended to convey that a gift is Rajasic if it possesses any of the three traits mentioned in the verse.

The Lord now defines a Tamasic gift.

अदेशकाले यद्दानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते ।

असत्कृतमवज्ञातं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ २२ ॥

यद् दानम् a gift which; असत्कृतम् without good grace; अवज्ञातम् (or) disdainfully; अदेशकाले out of time and place; च and; अपात्रेभ्यः to undeserving persons; दीयते is given; तद् that; तामसम् (as) Tamasic; उदाहृतम् has been spoken of.

A gift which is made without good grace and in a disdainful spirit out of time and place and to undeserving persons, is said to be Tamasic. (22)

A gift which is given in a cold manner without due attention to - the deserving man who comes to receive it, i. e., without greeting him, enquiring after his health, addressing sweet and polite words to him and offering him a seat etc., is known as 'Asatkṛtam'.

Similarly a gift which is made with an adverse criticism and unpleasant remarks, which is accompanied with a threat and a strict warning not to appear again, and which is given with words of ridicule or with an insult offered through speech, body or gesture, is called 'Avajñātam.'

That time and place which are not suitable for a gift, that is to say, in which a gift is unnecessary or forbidden by the scriptures (e. g., the gift of a cow outside India or giving away girl in marriage during an eclipse), are referred to here by the compound word 'Adeśakāle'. A gift which is made at such a time and

place paves the way for hell, hence it has been denounced as 'Tamasic.'

Those who need no gift and who have been precluded by the Śāstras from receiving a gift, e. g., he who makes a show of piety, a hypocrite, an imposter, a cruel man, a calumniator, he who is intent on achieving his own selfish ends by depriving others of their means of subsistence, he who affects humility, he who takes forbidden articles such as meat and wine, he who indulges in mean pursuits such as thieving, adultery etc., a swindler, a gambler, an unbeliever and so on, all these are unfit for receiving a gift. A gift bestowed on them is fruitless and leads the donor to hell; hence it is Tamasic in character. This should, not, however, be taken to debar anyone from giving food, water, clothing and medicine etc. to the hungry, thirsty, naked and sick according to their respective needs.

Thus, with a view to declaring sacrifice, austerity and charity etc. of the Sattvic type as worth practising and those of the Rajasic and Tamasic types as worth renouncing, sacrifice etc. have been classified under three heads each. The next topic is now introduced in order to show what connection they have with God and how a flaw or defect in the practice of the Sattvic types of sacrifice, austerity and charity is set right, and so on.

ॐ तत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः ।

ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुरा ॥ २३ ॥

ॐ the syllable OM; तत् the syllable TAT; सत् the syllable SAT; इति this; त्रिविधः threefold; ब्रह्मणः of the Absolute (who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified); निर्देशः appellation; स्मृतः has been declared; तेन by that; पुरा at the cosmic dawn; ब्राह्मणाः the Brahmans; च and; वेदाः the Vedas; च as well as; यज्ञाः sacrifices etc; विहिताः were created.

OM, TAT and SAT—this has been declared as the threefold appellation of the Absolute, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. By

that were the Brahmins and the Vedas as well as sacrifices were created at the cosmic dawn. (23)

Although there are countless names of Brahma or Almighty God, the appellations, OM, TAT and SAT have been recognized as the foremost in the Vedas and they are specially connected with sacred pursuits like sacrifice, austerity and charity. Hence these three alone have been mentioned here.

The pronoun 'Tena' refers to Brahma, who bears the three appellations, rather than to the appellations (Nirdeśah) themselves.

Here it may be urged that while in Chapter III above the entire creation including sacrifices has been spoken of as having emanated from Brahmā, the lord of creation (III. 10), the present verse declares the Brahmins etc. as having evolved from God Himself; how are these two statements to be reconciled? In this connection it may be submitted that Brahmā, the lord of creation, has taken his descent from God, while the Brahmins, the Vedas and sacrifices etc. have all emanated from Brahmā. There-

fore, at some places these have been spoken of as having emanated from God Himself, while at others they have been declared as having evolved from Brahmā, the lord of creation. It is, however, just the same.

The word 'Brāhmaṇāḥ' in this verse should be taken to cover all created beings from the Brahman downwards; and 'Yajñāḥ' should be understood to include sacrifice, austerity, charity and all other duties of an obligatory nature enjoined by the scriptures.

The idea underlying this verse is that the syllables OM, TAT and SAT are appellations of God, from whom this entire creation consisting of the sacrificer, the act of sacrifice and the body of rules governing such sacrificial performances has emanated; hence the utterance etc. of these appellations corrects the flaws and defects of all these performances. Utterance of the names of God is, therefore, most essential at the beginning of each undertaking.

Here it may be asked: What connection do these three names of God—OM, TAT and SAT—have with sacrifice, austerity and charity etc.? Anticipating this query, the Lord first tells us about the use of OM.

तस्मादोमित्युदाहृत्य यज्ञदानतपःक्रियाः ।

प्रवर्तन्ते विधानोक्ताः सततं ब्रह्मवादिनाम् ॥ २४ ॥

tasmā therefore; brāhmaṇāṇāṃ of noble souls given to the recitation of Vedic chants; vidhānoḥ: enjoined by sacred precepts; yajñadānatapaḥkriyāḥ: acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity; satatam always; ōm the syllable OM; इति this; उदाहृत्य uttering; प्रवर्तन्ते proceed.

Therefore, acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity as enjoined by sacred precepts are always commenced by noble souls given to the recitation of Vedic chants with utterance of the divine name OM. (24)

The present verse is primarily intended to reveal the glory of the Divine Name. What the Lord seeks to convey through this verse is that, being a name of God, from whom acts of sacrifice etc. have proceeded, the syllable OM corrects by its very utterance the flaws and defects of all such performances and lends them a sacred and blessed character. Such is the infinite glory of the Divine Name. The

word 'Brahmavādinām' refers to those learned Brahmanes, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas who are qualified to perform sacrifices and other sacred acts while reciting the Vedic chants. They never and in no case undertake any sacred performance whatsoever without uttering the holy name OM. Therefore, every one should emulate their noble example.

Having thus spoken about the use of the syllable OM, the Lord now tells us about the use of another name of God—TAT.

तदित्यनभिसंधाय फलं यज्ञतपःक्रियाः ।

दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः क्रियन्ते मोक्षकाङ्क्षिभिः ॥ २५ ॥

तत् (all this belongs to God who is denoted by the name of) TAT; इति with this idea; फलम् return; अनभिसंधाय not expecting; विविधाः of various kinds; यज्ञतपःक्रियाः acts of sacrifice and austerity; च as well as; दानक्रियाः acts of charity; मोक्षकाङ्क्षिभिः by the seekers of blessedness; क्रियन्ते are performed.

With the idea that all this belongs to God, who is denoted by the appellation TAT, acts of sacrifice and austerity as well as acts of charity of various kinds are performed by the seekers of blessedness expecting no return for them. (25)

The word TAT is a name of God. It has been used in this verse along with the particle 'Iti' in order to explain the object of its utterance. The idea is that uttering this name of God at the commencement of every undertaking, seekers of beatitude entirely give up the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' by remembering that everything belongs to God, from whom the whole of this universe has emanated, and that it is through His articles, according to His behest and for His sake that acts of sacrifice etc. are performed by them, they being a mere instrument.

Ordinary men of the world who follow the injunctions of the scriptures and are qualified to recite Vedic Mantras are unable to overcome the desire for fruit or the feelings of 'I' and 'mine'. The seekers of beatitude, however, who need nothing but God-Realization, perform every action for the sake of God alone and according to His behest, entirely giving up the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' as well as attachment and the craving for fruit. The Lord has thereby stressed the value of relinquishing the desire for fruit.

Having spoken about the use of the appellation TAT, the Lord now tells us about the use of the third name of God, viz., SAT, in the following two verses.

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते ।

प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते ॥ २६ ॥

सत् SAT; इति एतत् this name of God; सद्भावे in the sense of truth; च and; साधुभावे in the sense of goodness; प्रयुज्यते is employed; तथा and; पार्थ O son of Prthā (Kunti), Arjuna; प्रशस्ते कर्मणि in the sense of a praiseworthy act (too); सच्छब्दः the term SAT; युज्यते is used.

The name of God, SAT, is employed in the sense of truth and goodness. And the word SAT is also used in the sense of a praiseworthy act, Arjuna. (26)

The compound word 'Sadbhāve' in this verse stands for eternality or the immortal truth which lasts for ever, and such is the essential character of God. Hence it is spoken of as SAT.

A noble deed which is worth performing and has been enjoined by the Śāstras is spoken of as 'Prasāsta' or praiseworthy. Performed in a disinterested spirit, it leads to God-Realization. Hence the name of God, 'SAT', is used with reference to it, that is to say, it is called a 'Satkarma'.

The guileless and noble disposition of the mind is called 'Sādhubhāva'. It is conducive to God-Realization; hence the name of God, 'SAT', forms part of the

यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते ।

कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते ॥ २७ ॥

च and; यज्ञे in sacrifice; तपसि in austerity; च and; दाने in charity; स्थितिः steadfastness; एव likewise; सत् 'Sat'; इति thus; उच्यते is spoken of; च and; तदर्थीयम् performed for the sake of Him; i.e., God; कर्म action; एव verily; सत् 'Sat'; इति so; अभिधीयते is termed.

And steadfastness in sacrifice, austerity and charity is likewise spoken of as 'Sat', and action for the sake of God is verily termed as 'Sat'. (27)

The words 'Yajñe', 'Tapasi' and 'Dāne' in this verse denote only the Sattvic forms of sacrifice, austerity and charity; and faith in and loving reverence for these, which is also spoken of as 'Niṣṭhā', has been referred to here as 'Sthiti'. Being conducive to God-Realization, this 'Sthiti' or steadfastness in them is called by the name of 'Sat'.

behest of God and for His sake alone, in which the doer has no selfish interest. Such action purifies the heart of the doer and enables him to realize God; hence it is called 'SAT'.

The word 'Karma', qualified by the adjective 'Tadarthīyam' stands for such action as is performed according to the

The use of the particle 'Eva' after the word 'Karma' in the second half of this verse is intended to convey that only such action as is performed for the sake of God is really 'Sat'; other actions, inasmuch as their fruit is evanescent, hardly deserve this epithet.

In this way the Lord pointed out the value of actions such as sacrifice, austerity and charity etc. enjoined by the scriptures and performed with reverence. This naturally tempts one to enquire about the result of those acts of sacrifice etc. which, though enjoined by the Śāstras, are performed without faith. Anticipating this query, the Lord now concludes the chapter with the following remarks.

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत् ।

असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह ॥ २८ ॥

पार्थ O son of Prthā (Kunti), Arjuna; अश्रद्धया without faith; हुतम् that which is offered as an oblation; दत्तम् that which is given; तप्तम् tapt: austerity practised; च and; यत् whatever; कृतम् (noble act) is performed; असत् naught; इति so; उच्यते is declared; तत् that (is of avail); नो neither; इह here; न च nor; प्रेत्य hereafter.

An oblation which is offered, a gift given, an austerity practised, and whatever good deed is performed, without faith, it is all termed as naught; therefore, it is of no avail here or hereafter. (28)

An offering into the sacred fire, a gift and an act of penance and other noble deeds are able to purify the heart and bestow rewards in this world or the next only when they are accompanied with faith. Noble deeds done without faith are fruitless; that is why they have been declared as naught (Asat) and of no avail here or hereafter.

There is no need of faith in perpetrating forbidden acts and their fruit too does not depend on one's faith. Moreover, they are perpetrated by those men alone who do not possess full faith in the Śāstras, exalted souls and God Himself, and who do not believe that

sinful acts bear fruit; nevertheless they do reap the painful consequences of such acts. Therefore, the words 'Yat kṛtam' do not include sinful deeds. Besides this, having been mentioned along with noble acts such as sacrifice, charity and austerity, 'Yat kṛtam' can only denote actions of the same category. Hence the statement that these actions are of no avail here or hereafter cannot apply to sinful deeds; for since they are purely productive of sorrow, there is no possibility whatsoever of their yielding any good results. Hence the present verse speaks only of noble deeds performed without faith, and not of vile deeds.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां

योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे श्रद्धात्रयविभागयोगो

नाम सप्तदशोऽध्यायः ॥ १७ ॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture on Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the seventeenth chapter entitled "The Yoga of the Division of the Threefold Faith".

Kalyana-Kalpataru

Call to Surrender



“Resigning all your duties to Me, the all-powerful and all-supporting Lord, take refuge in Me alone. I shall absolve you of all sins; grieve not.”

(XVIII. 66)

Chapter XVIII

Mokṣa consists in securing lasting freedom from the bondage of mundane existence in the form of birth and death and realizing God, who is no other than supreme Bliss. Summing up the substance of all previous chapters, the present one discusses, under the names of 'Sannyāsa' and 'Tyāga' respectively, the Paths of Knowledge and Action, both of which are means to the attainment of Mokṣa, in all their details; and secondly, the teaching of the Gītā has been wound up (XVIII.66) with an exhortation to offer all actions to God, who is the same as Mokṣa. It is for these reasons that the chapter has been given the title of 'Mokṣa-Sannyāsa-Yoga'.

In the opening verse of this chapter Arjuna expresses his desire to know the truth about Sannyāsa and Tyāga: in the second and third the Lord records the views of other thinkers on the subject; in the fourth and fifth He invites Arjuna to hear His own conclusion about Tyāga, and establishes the advisability of not relinquishing one's obligatory duties; while in the sixth He gives His own considered opinion in the matter of Tyāga, and declares it as superior to the other views. Thereafter, defining the Tamasic, Rajasic and Sattvic forms of Tyāga in the seventh, eighth and ninth respectively, He describes the marks of a Tyāgī (man of renunciation) of the Sattvic type in the tenth and eleventh. Demonstrating the greatness of men of renunciation the Lord winds up the topic of Tyāga in the twelfth. Thereafter, inviting Arjuna to hear His dissertation on Sāṅkhya, the Lord discusses up to the fifteenth the five factors which contribute to the accomplishment of actions, viz., Adhiṣṭhāna etc., according to the viewpoint of Sāṅkhya. Denouncing in the sixteenth the man who regards the pure spirit as the doer, the Lord praises in the seventeenth one who performs actions without claiming the doership. Mentioning the threefold incentive to action as well as the three constituents of action in the eighteenth, the Lord introduces the threefold division of knowledge and action as well as of the doer in the nineteenth, and actually divides them under three heads, viz. Sattvic, Rajasic, and Tamasic, from the twentieth to the twenty-eighth. Introducing in the twenty-ninth the threefold division of Buddhi (reason) and Dhṛti (firmness), the Lord divides them under three heads, viz., Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic, from the thirtieth to the thirty-fifth. Dividing Sukha (joy) under three heads, viz., Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic, from the thirty-sixth to the thirty-ninth, the Lord winds up the topic of Guṇas and declares the whole world as made up of the three Guṇas in the fortieth. Thereafter, introducing the topic of the natural functions of the four grades of society in the forty-first, the Lord enumerates the natural functions of the Brahmans in the forty-second, of the Kṣatriyas in the forty-third and of the Vaiśyas

and Śūdras in the forty-fourth. Declaring in the forty-fifth that men can attain highest perfection through the performance of their respective duties, the Lord tells us in the forty-sixth the method of attaining it. Extolling the performance of one's own duty in the forty-seventh, He discourages renunciation of the same in the forty-eighth. Thereafter, resuming the discussion of Sannyāsayoga from the forty-ninth and declaring that one can attain the highest perfection through Sannyāsa, the Lord undertakes in the fiftieth to speak of the culmination of the Yoga of Knowledge and discusses from the fifty-first to the fifty-fifth the Yoga of Knowledge with its fruit. Thereafter, from the fifty-sixth to the fifty-eighth the Lord points out the glory and fruit of Karmayoga which lays special emphasis on Bhakti and commands Arjuna to practise the same, warning him at the same time of the risk involved in not obeying Him. Declaring in the fifty-ninth and sixtieth the inability of Arjuna to abandon his natural duties due to his inherent nature, the Lord commands him in the sixty-first and sixty-second to take refuge with all his being in God, who is the lord and inner controller of all. Winding up the topic in the sixty-third and asking Arjuna to do as he pleased after weighing everything, the Lord invites him in the sixty-fourth to hear once more the most esoteric truth, which is the quintessence of the whole Gītā. And imparting in the sixty-fifth and sixty-sixth that most esoteric gospel of exclusive surrender along with its fruit, the Lord winds up the teaching of the Gītā by asking Arjuna to take refuge in Him. Thereafter, warning Arjuna in the sixty-seventh not to impart the teaching of the Gītā to four types of unqualified persons, the Lord stresses the importance of popularizing the Gītā among qualified persons in the sixty-eighth and sixty-ninth, of studying the Gītā in the seventieth, and of merely listening with faith to the recitation of the Gītā in the seventy-first. In the seventy-second the Lord asks Arjuna if he listened to the Gītā with one-pointed attention and whether his delusion was dispelled; and in the seventy-third Arjuna assures the Lord that his delusion was dispelled, wisdom gained and all his doubts removed, and agrees to do His bidding. Thereafter, from the seventy-fourth to the seventy-seventh Sañjaya glorifies the teaching of the Gītā in the form of a dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, and tells Dhṛtarāṣṭra how the thought of that dialogue as well as of the cosmic form of the Lord filled him with wonder and joy again and again. And he winds up the chapter by proclaiming in the seventy-eighth that the side with which Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna had ranged themselves was sure to win and attain glory etc.

The gospel of the Gītā actually commenced from verse 11 of Chapter II. In verses 11 to 30 of that chapter the Lord taught Jñānayoga and, incidentally establishing the advisability of waging war from the viewpoint of the code of morality laid down for a Kṣatriya, taught Karmayoga from verse 39 right up to the end of the chapter. Thereafter, from Chapter III to Chapter XVII, the Lord detailed a number of disciplines for God-Realization, some from the viewpoint of Sāṅkhyayoga and others from that of

*Link of the
Discourse*

Karmayoga. Having heard of all these, Arjuna now expresses the desire to know separately and clearly the truth of Sannyāsa or Jñānayoga and of Tyāga or Karmayoga which consists in relinquishing the attachment for fruit, in order to have the essence of the teaching of all chapters in the present chapter.

अर्जुन उवाच

संन्यासस्य महाबाहो तत्त्वमिच्छामि वेदितुम् ।

त्यागस्य च हृषीकेश पृथक्केशिनिषूदन ॥ १ ॥

महाबाहो O mighty-armed Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa; हृषीकेश O inner controller; केशिनिषूदन O slayer of the demon Keśi (who had taken the form of a mighty horse in order to kill Śrī Kṛṣṇa); संन्यासस्य of Sannyāsa; च as well as; त्यागस्य of Tyāga; तत्त्वम् the truth; पृथक् severally; वेदितुम् to know; इच्छामि I seek.

Arjuna said: O mighty-armed Śrī Kṛṣṇa, O inner controller of all, O Slayer of Keśi, I wish to know severally the truth of Sannyāsa and Tyāga. (1)

The use of the vocatives 'Mahābāho', 'Hṛṣīkeśa' and 'Keśiniṣūdana' is intended to convey that Śrī Kṛṣṇa being Almighty God Himself, the inner controller of all and the destroyer of all evils, knows full well what Arjuna seeks to learn from Him. Arjuna, therefore, expects that the Lord would attend to his prayer and enlighten him on the subject in such a way as to enable him to grasp it fully and correctly and to resolve all his doubts completely.

In the present verse Arjuna seeks light on the following points: What is the essential character of Sannyāsa? What type of ideas and actions are helpful to it and what are prejudicial to it? How is Sāṅkhyayoga practised with worship and how is it practised without worship? Even so what is the essential character of Tyāga (i. e., Karmayoga, which consists in relinquishing the attachment for fruit) How do they practise Karmayoga of the unmixed

type? What practices are helpful to it and what hinder it? What is Karmayoga mixed with Bhakti or Devotion? What is the nature of Karmayoga dominated by Bhakti? And how do they practise Karmayoga mixed with Bhakti and Karmayoga dominated by Bhakti while performing their secular and sacred duties? Arjuna further requests that the points of difference between the two may be clearly brought out, so that they may not be promiscuously blended or confused with each other.

A critical survey of this chapter will show that the points mentioned above have all been touched by the Lord in the course of it. Thus the essential character of Sannyāsa (Jñānayoga) has been discussed in verses 13 to 17. The Sattvic virtues and actions mentioned in verses 19 to 40 are helpful to the practice of this discipline, while the Rajasic and Tamasic traits and actions are hostile to it. Verses 50 to 55 describe in detail

the mode as well as the fruit of the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga with worship, while verse 17 gives the process of pure Sāṅkhyayoga.

Even so verse 6 reveals the essential character of Karmayoga (which consists in relinquishing the attachment for fruit). Verse 9 gives us under the name of Sattvic Tyāga the mode of practice of the pure or unmixed type of Karmayoga. Verses 47 and 48 pronounce the performance

of one's own duty as helpful to the pursuit of this discipline and the Tamasic and Rajasic types of Tyāga as mentioned in verses 7 and 8 as impediments to it. Verses 45 and 46 discuss Karmayoga blended with devotion, while verses 56 to 66 speak of Karmayoga dominated by Devotion. Verse 46 teaches us how to practise Karmayoga blended with Bhakti; while verse 57 tells us how to practise Karmayoga with special emphasis on Bhakti.

Thus addressed by Arjuna, the Lord cites the diverse views of other thinkers on the subject of Sannyāsa and Tyāga in two verses before expressing His own opinion in the matter.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं संन्यासं कवयो विदुः ।

सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः ॥ २ ॥

कवयः (some) sages; काम्यानाम् कर्मणाम् of actions motivated by desire; न्यासम् renunciation; संन्यासम् (as) Sannyāsa; विदुः understand; विचक्षणाः (and) other thinkers; सर्वकर्मफलत्यागम् relinquishing the fruit of all actions; त्यागम् (as) Tyāga; प्राहुः declare;

Śrī Bhagavān said: Some sages understand Sannyāsa as the giving up of all actions motivated by desire; and other thinkers declare that Tyāga consists in relinquishing the fruit of all actions. (2)

Particular acts of sacrifice, charity, penance and worship and other noble acts that have been recommended in the Śāstras for the attainment of agreeable objects such as wife, progeny, wealth and an abode in heaven etc., and for getting rid of that which is disagreeable, such as disease and danger etc., are referred to here as 'Kāmyānām Karmaṇām'. The word 'Kāmyānām' further indicates that such acts are optional and not obligatory. That is to say, they may be undertaken if one seeks some return for them; but their omission on the part of those who seek no return will bring no harm to them.

to show that according to some sages, Sannyāsa consists in merely giving up such optional duties. In the opinion of these sages, Sannyāsis are those who duly perform only such duties as must be performed daily or require to be performed on special occasions, and have given up the optional duties referred to above.

Devotion to God, worship of other deities, service of one's parents and other elders, sacrifice, charity and penance and vocational duties peculiar to one's grade in society and stage in life and bodily functions such as taking food, drink and so on, and all other duties of an obligatory nature enjoined by the scriptures, the

The first half of this verse is intended

omission of which interferes with the idea of any reward.

morality, religion and tradition are included in 'Sarvakarma'. And 'Sarvakarmaphalatyāga' consists in giving up the desire for all enjoyments of this world as well as of the next, such as wife, progeny, wealth, honour, fame, prestige and heavenly bliss etc., obtained through the performance of such acts, that is to say, in associating no such action with

By the latter half of this verse the Lord seeks to convey that, in the eye of those who use their critical faculty in distinguishing the eternal from the evanescent, Tyāga consists in relinquishing the fruit of all actions as indicated above, and performing one's obligatory duties alone; hence they perform all their duties in such a spirit.

त्याज्यं दोषवदित्येके कर्म प्राहुर्मनीषिणः ।

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यमिति चापरे ॥ ३ ॥

एके some; मनीषिणः men of wisdom; इति thus; प्राहुः declare (that); कर्म (all) action; दोषवत् contains some measure of evil; त्याज्यम् (and therefore) worth giving up; च and; अपरे others; इति (say) thus; यज्ञदानतपःकर्म (that) acts of sacrifice, charity and penance; त्याज्यम् न (are) not worth shunning.

Some wise men declare that all action contains a measure of evil, and is therefore worth giving up; while others say that acts of sacrifice charity and penance are not worth shunning. (3)

By the first half of this verse the Lord seeks to convey that every undertaking invariably gets tainted with sin to some extent, hence even such duties as have been enjoined on us are not wholly free from blemish. It is in order to impress this idea that the Lord Himself says elsewhere in the course of this very chapter that "all undertakings are involved in sin as fire in smoke". (XVIII. 48.)* Therefore, some men of wisdom declare that the man who seeks blessedness should actually give up all kinds of actions including those that must be performed daily, those that require to be performed on special occasions and those

that are motivated by desire, or in other words, that he should enter the order of Sannyāsa or Renunciation.

According to other wise men, however, acts of sacrifice, charity and penance are not really tainted with blemish. They hold that the sins of violence etc. with which undertakings of all sorts are unavoidably found tainted are really no sins; on the other hand, having been enjoined by the scriptures, they serve to purify the agent. Hence a man seeking beatitude should shun only prohibited acts and should not abstain from duties enjoined by the Śāstras.

Having thus cited the divergent views of men of wisdom on the subject of Sannyāsa and Tyāga, the Lord now proceeds to pronounce His own conclusion on the subject of Tyāga.

* सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ।

निश्चयं शृणु मे तत्र त्यागे भरतसत्तम ।

त्यागो हि पुरुषव्याघ्र त्रिविधः सम्प्रकीर्तितः ॥ ४ ॥

पुरुषव्याघ्र O tiger among men; भरतसत्तम O best of Bharatas; तत्र of Sannyāsa and Tyāga; त्यागे on the subject of Tyāga (in the first instance); मे My; निश्चयम् conclusion; शृणु hear; हि because; त्यागः Tyāga; त्रिविधः of three kinds (viz., Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic); सम्प्रकीर्तितः has been declared to be.

Of Sannyāsa and Tyāga, first hear My conclusion on the subject of Tyāga, Arjuna; for Tyāga, O tiger among men, has been declared to be of three kinds—Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic. (4)

By addressing Arjuna as 'Bharata-sattama' and 'Puruṣavyāghra' the Lord seeks to convey that of the three types of Tyāga going to be discussed by Him in the course of this chapter, he is capable of practising the Sattvic form of Tyāga, which is only another name for Karma-yoga or the Path of Action, and should avoid the other two, viz. the Rajasic and Tamasic types.

It will be remembered that in the opening verse of this chapter Arjuna requested the Lord to reveal the truth of both Sannyāsa and Tyāga; and of these two, the Lord proceeds in this verse to discuss the truth of Tyāga in the first instance. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the in-

declinable 'Tatra' in this verse. Arjuna requested the Lord to expound the truth of the two separately and the Lord has hinted at His intention to discuss the subject of Tyāga alone without declining his request. This shows that He will discuss the subject of Sannyāsa later on.

The use of the words 'Me Niśchayam' in this verse is intended to convey that none of the views so far expressed by Him fully represents His own view, which is now introduced by Him.

By referring to the three types of Tyāga mentioned in the Śāstras the Lord indicates that the view He holds on the subject is supported by the scriptures. This He does in order to show His regard for the scriptures.

Thus calling the attention of Arjuna to His own view on the subject, and in order to reveal the true nature of Tyāga as understood by Him, the Lord first of all gives in two verses His conclusion about the performance of commendable acts enjoined by the scriptures.

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत् ।

यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ॥ ५ ॥

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म acts of sacrifice, charity and penance; न (is) not; त्याज्यम् worth giving up; तत् (on the other hand) that; कार्यम् एव must be performed; यज्ञः (for) sacrifice; दानम् charity; च and; तपः penance; एव all these; मनीषिणाम् of wise men; पावनानि (are) purifiers.

(5)

what spirit they are to be performed.

एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च ।

कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम् ॥ ६ ॥

Hence these acts of sacrifice, charity and penance, and all other acts too, must be performed without attachment and hope of reward: this is My considered and supreme verdict, Arjuna. (6)

'Sangam' means attachment, not only to the action itself, but to its fruit as well, while 'Phalāni' means the desire for fruit in the shape of enjoyments, of this world as well as of the next, that may be obtained from those acts. 'Sangam tyaktvā phalāni cha' may also be taken to mean that a seeker of liberation should abstain from prohibited acts as well as from acts which are motivated by desire.

The words "Iti Me niśchitam matam

uttamam'' signify that such is the Lord's own conception of Tyāga. That is to say, in the opinion of the Lord, Tyāga consists in performing one's allotted duties without attachment and without any hope of reward; for he who performs his duties in the aforesaid manner is freed from the bondage of actions and attains the supreme state. He ceases to have anything to do with his actions.

Now let us examine the views of other sages referred to by the Lord as well as that of the Lord Himself on their own merits and see for ourselves how the Lord's own view is decidedly superior to the other views. It will thus be seen that the definitions of Tyāga and Sannyāsa as propounded by other sages are far from ideal or perfect. For, even if one actually abstains from actions which are motivated by desire, other actions of an obligatory or occasional type will lead to bondage if one continues to entertain a feeling of mineness, attachment and desire with regard to those actions and their fruit. Even if one gives up the desire for the fruit of all actions, they may lead to bondage if

one continues to entertain the feeling of mineness and attachment with respect to them. Without renouncing the feeling of 'I' and 'mine', attachment and desire we cannot be freed from the bondage of actions even if we shun our obligatory duties, regarding all action as containing some measure of evil; for by doing so we incur the sin of neglecting a prescribed duty. Even so, acts of sacrifice, charity and penance will lead to bondage if one continues to perform them without renouncing attachment and the desire for their fruit. Therefore, Sannyāsa and Tyāga as defined by those sages cannot secure complete freedom from the bondage of actions. Complete renunciation or Tyāga consists in renouncing the feeling of mineness and attachment in respect of all one's actions, as well as the desire for their fruit, as advised by the Lord. By doing so one secures complete freedom from the bondage of actions. For action in itself is not conducive to bondage; it is the feeling of mineness and attachment with respect to it and the desire for its fruit that lead to bondage. Herein lies the superiority of the Lord's view over the views of others.

Thus expressing His considered opinion in the matter, the Lord now defines in an ascending order the three types of Tyāga in the following three verses, and begins with the marks of the Tamasic type. His object in doing so is to point out that of the three types of Tyāga mentioned in the scriptures, viz., Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic, the Sattvic type alone is real Tyāga and worth practising, while the other two types of Tyāga are no Tyāga in the real sense of the term and are not worth practising, as well as to show that His view is in complete accord with the Śāstras.

नियतस्य तु संन्यासः कर्मणो नोपपद्यते ।

मोहात्तस्य परित्यागस्तामसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ ७ ॥

तु but; नियतस्य कर्मणः of a prescribed duty; संन्यासः (actual) renunciation; न not; उपपद्यते is advisable; मोहात् through ignorance; तस्य its; परित्यागः abandonment; तामसः Tamasic in character; परिकीर्तितः has been declared.

(Prohibited acts and those that are motivated by desire should no doubt be given up.) But it is not advisable to abandon a prescribed duty.

Its abandonment through ignorance has been declared as Tamasic. (7)

Sacrifice, charity, penance, study and teaching, giving religious discourses, warfare, governance of the people, rearing of cattle, agriculture, trade, service, eating and drinking and all other duties that have been enjoined by the Śāstras as binding on a particular man with due regard to his grade in society, stage in life, temperament and circumstances, are 'Niyata Karma' for him. He who actually gives up these duties fails to discharge his obligation and thereby incurs sin; for such neglect of duty causes a break in the continuity of action and brings about a chaos in the whole world (III. 23-24). Hence it is not advisable to abandon one's allotted duties.

The Tyāga or renunciation on the part of him who gives up his allotted duty, erroneously taking such renunciation to be a means to liberation, is inspired by Tamas inasmuch as it is actuated by ignorance; for Moha or ignorance has been declared to be a product of Tamoguna (XIV. 13, 17). And it has been pointed out by the Lord that men possessing a Tamasic disposition fall in the scale of spiritual evolution (XIV. 18). Hence the form of renunciation referred to above is not such as enables one to secure freedom from the bondage of Karma. On the other hand, it brings about one's downfall inasmuch as it involves one in the sin accruing from neglect of duty.

Having characterized the Tamasic form of Tyāga, the Lord now defines Rajasic Tyāga.

दुःखमित्येव यत्कर्म कायक्लेशमयात्पजेत् ।

स कृत्वा राजसं त्यागं नैव त्यागफलं लभेत् ॥ ८ ॥

यत् whatever; कर्म action (is done); दुःखम् (is) of the nature of discomfort; एव indeed; इति so (thinking); कायक्लेशमयात् for fear of physical strain; त्यजेत् should anyone give up (his duties); सः he; राजसम् त्यागम् (such) Rajasic form of renunciation; कृत्वा practising; त्यागफलम् the fruit of renunciation; न एव in no case; लभेत् reaps.

Should anyone give up his duties for fear of physical strain, thinking that all action is verily of the nature of discomfort,—practising such Rajasic form of renunciation, he reaps not the fruit of renunciation. (8)

The word 'Karma', qualified by the relative adjective 'Yat', covers all actions enjoined by the scriptures and mentioned in the commentary on verse 7 above. The performance of these actions involves exertion of one's mind, senses and body; nay, in course of it one is faced with many obstacles; one is required to collect a lot of materials, to forgo bodily comforts and suffer hardships by undertaking sacred vows and fasts, and to observe

many restrictions of various kinds. Thinking thus, he who gives up actions enjoined by the scriptures, such as sacrifice, charity and penance etc., in order to avoid exertion of mind, senses and body and to enjoy relaxation is said to abandon his duties for fear of physical strain.

The latter half of this verse shows that he who gives up his allotted duties and enters the order of Sannyāsa with

such feelings practises what they call the Rajasic form of renunciation; for attachment to the relaxation of mind, senses and body is an offspring of Rajoguna. Hence he who practises this form of renunciation fails to reap the fruit of true renunciation, viz., freedom from the shackles of Karma and realization of God; for so long as there is the feeling of mineness and attachment in respect of one's mind, senses and body one can

never be freed from the bondage of actions. Hence this Rajasic form of renunciation is no renunciation in the true acceptation of the term, it is renunciation only in name. Therefore, seekers of beatitude should not practise such renunciation. Far from reaping the fruit of true renunciation, he who practises this form of renunciation is liable to incur the sin accruing from neglect of one's allotted duties.

The Lord now defines the Sattvic, which is the best, type of Tyāga.

कार्यमित्येव यत्कर्म नियतं क्रियतेऽर्जुन ।

सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यागः सात्त्विको मतः ॥ ९ ॥

अर्जुन O Arjuna; यत् नियतं कर्म a prescribed duty which; कार्यम् it must be performed; इति with this idea; एव alone; सङ्गम् attachment; च and; फलम् the fruit; त्यक्त्वा renouncing; क्रियते is performed; सः that; त्यागः renunciation; एव alone; सात्त्विकः of the Sattvic type; मतः has been recognized (to be).

A prescribed duty which is performed simply because it has to be performed, giving up attachment and fruit, that alone has been recognized as the Sattvic form of renunciation. (9)

The word 'Karma', qualified by the adjective 'Niyatam', in this verse covers all those duties which have been prescribed by the Śāstras as binding on a particular man with due regard to his grade in society, stage in life, temperament and circumstances, and which have been discussed in the commentary on verse 6 above. This should also be taken to mean that prohibited acts and those which are motivated by desire are not included in the category of 'Niyata Karma'.

By speaking of Karmayoga, which consists in the active performance of duty, as the Sattvic form of renunciation, the Lord shows that according to Him true renunciation lies, not in renouncing

one's duties of an obligatory nature enjoined by the Śāstras, but in totally giving up attachment and desire for those actions, as well as for all objects obtained as a result of such actions: giving up one's allotted duties for any reason whatsoever without renouncing attachment and desire for the enjoyments of this world as well as of the next, obtained as a result of those actions, is no true renunciation. For renunciation should result in the non-recognition of any connection with actions; and this consummation could be reached only by renouncing the feeling of mineness, attachment and desire, and not merely by giving up one's duties. Therefore, Sattvic Tyāga consists in renouncing attachment and desire for the fruit of all actions.

It may be asked here: What is the idea of the man practising the Sattvic form of renunciation in shunning prohibited acts and those that are

motivated by desire, and in performing duties of an obligatory nature? Anticipating this query, the Lord gives below the characteristics of the final stage reached by the man practising the Sattvic form of renunciation.

न द्वेष्ट्यकुशलं कर्म कुशले नानुषज्जते ।

त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः ॥ १० ॥

अकुशलम् कर्म action which does not bring lasting happiness; न not; द्वेष्टि (he who) shrinks from; कुशले to that which is conducive to blessedness; न nor; अनुषज्जते gets attached; सत्त्वसमाविष्टः (that man) imbued with the quality of Sattva (goodness); छिन्नसंशयः he whose doubts have been resolved; मेधावी intelligent; त्यागी (and) a man of true renunciation.

He who shrinks not from action which does not bring lasting happiness, nor gets attached to that which is conducive to blessedness,—imbued with the quality of goodness, he has all his doubts resolved, is intelligent and a man of true renunciation. (10)

The word 'Karma', qualified by the adjective 'Akusalam', in this verse stands for sinful acts prohibited by the Śāstras, as well as for those that are motivated by desire; for, while sinful acts cause one's birth in sub-human species of various kinds and throw one into the infernal regions, actions motivated by desire too bring about rebirth in order to enable one to reap their fruit. Being thus conducive to bondage, both these types of action are called 'Akusala'. The man who practises the Sattvic form of renunciation is entirely free from likes and dislikes; hence the shunning of prohibited and desire-born acts on his part is not actuated by hatred. He shuns them in the interest of the world order and with a recognition of the fact that it is his duty to shun acts which are not conducive to lasting good. This is what is meant by the words 'Na dveṣṭi akusalam Karma'.

'Kusale' denotes virtuous acts of the obligatory and occasional types enjoined by the scriptures, e. g., sacrifice, charity

and austerity etc., and all other duties consistent with one's grade in society and stage in life. Performed in a disinterested spirit, these actions are capable of wiping out man's accumulated sins of previous lives and freeing him from the bondage of actions; hence they are spoken of as 'Kusala' (conducive to one's lasting good). The words "Kusale na anuṣajjate", therefore, mean that the performance of such noble acts on the part of the man of Sattvic renunciation is not actuated by attachment; he performs them for the maintenance of the world-order, renouncing the feeling of mineness, attachment and the desire for fruit, and with a sense of duty.

The man of a Sattvic disposition who performs or shuns actions with a sense of duty and without any partiality or prejudice is convinced that the Sattvic Tyāga in the form of Karmayoga is the only perfect means of securing freedom from the bondage of actions and attaining the supreme state. This is what is meant by the adjective 'Ohinnasamsayah'.

In the above verse the man of renunciation of the Sattvic type, i. e., the Karmayogī performing his duties in a disinterested spirit, has been called a man of true renunciation. This raises the following question: The man who abstains from all sorts of action, as from those that are prohibited or motivated by desire, can as well be a man of true renunciation; how, then, does the Lord declare him alone who performs actions in a disinterested spirit as a man of true renunciation? Anticipating this query, the Lord says:—

न हि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्माण्यशेषतः ।

यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते ॥ ११ ॥

हि because; देहभृता by anyone possessing a body; अशेषतः in their entirety; कर्माणि (all) actions; त्यक्तुम् न शक्यम् cannot be given up; यः who; कर्मफलत्यागी renounces the fruit of actions; सः he; तु alone; त्यागी a man of renunciation; इति so; अभिधीयते is called.

Since all actions cannot be given up in their entirety by anyone possessing a body, he alone who renounces the fruit of actions is called a man of renunciation. (11)

The word 'Dehabhṛtā' covers all human beings who maintain and nourish their body. The first half of this verse is, therefore, intended to convey that no human being can remain inactive; for without action it is not possible even to maintain one's body (III, 8). Therefore, to whatever Āśrama or stage in life a man belongs, so long as he is alive, he must satisfy his hunger and thirst, keep his body either in a sitting or a lying posture, stir and move about, speak and do other things according to his circumstances. Hence it is not possible to give up all actions in their entirety.

The compound word 'Karmaphalatyāgī' stands for the Karmayogī who performs duties enjoined by the Śāstras, renouncing the feeling of mineness, attachment and

desire. Since everybody must do something, none can remain inactive. A man of true renunciation is he who totally abstains from prohibited actions and those that are motivated by desire and performs duties enjoined by the Śāstras according to the needs of the occasion, completely renouncing the feeling of mineness, attachment and desire in respect of those actions as well as for their fruit. This is what is meant by the latter half of this verse.

He who dwells with his mind on the objects of the world, outwardly restraining the functions of the senses, is no man of renunciation; and even so he who gives up duties enjoined by the Śāstras such as sacrifice, charity and austerity etc., even though attachment and the feeling of 'I' and 'mine' are present in him, is no Tyāgī either.

In the above verse it has been stated that a man of renunciation is he who renounces the fruit of actions. Here it may be urged that even though one may not expect any return for one's actions, the latter cannot be undone without yielding their fruit; just as a seed sown in the soil automatically gives

birth to a tree in course of time, even so the fruit of actions once performed must be reaped by all in one life or another. Such being the case, how can one be a Tyāgi i.e., 'free from the bondage of actions' by merely renouncing the fruit of actions? In order to meet this objection the Lord says:—

अनिष्टमिष्टं मिश्रं च त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम् ।

भवत्यत्यागिनां प्रेत्य न तु संन्यासिनां क्वचित् ॥ १२ ॥

अत्यागिनाम् कर्मणः of the actions of the unrenouncing; इष्टम् welcome; अनिष्टम् unwelcome; च and; मिश्रम् mixed; त्रिविधम् threefold, of three kinds; फलम् the fruit; प्रेत्य hereafter, after death; भवति does accrue; तु but; संन्यासिनाम् (of the actions) of those who have renounced; क्वचित् न (accrues) at no time.

Welcome, unwelcome and mixed—threefold, indeed, is the fruit that accrues hereafter from the actions of the unrenouncing. But there is none ever for those who have renounced. (12)

The word 'Atyāginām' refers to the generality of those common folk who have not renounced the feeling of mineness, attachment and desire in respect of actions performed by them and their fruit, that is to say, who perform all their actions with attachment and with a hope of reward.

Heavenly bliss or any other agreeable enjoyments of the terrestrial plane, attained as a result of virtuous acts performed by such men, constitute what is known as the welcome fruit; and birth in sub-human species such as beasts, birds, insects, moths and trees etc., tortures in hell or sufferings of any other kind brought about by their sinful deeds are spoken of as the unwelcome fruit. Even so, being born as a human being, he who obtains welcome enjoyments now and undergoes unwelcome experiences at another time is said to reap a mixed fruit. This is the threefold fruit yielded by one's actions.

The actions performed by these unrenouncing men cannot be neutralized until they have borne fruit, and continue to yield their welcome or unwelcome fruit

life after life; that is why such men go on revolving with the cycle of births and deaths.

In his current life man generally reaps his Prārabdha or destiny carved out of his doings in previous lives; the fruit of his current actions is seldom reaped in this life. Therefore, the fruit of actions performed in course of one human life is bound to be reaped in many lives. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the word 'Pretya'.

The particle 'Tu' is intended to distinguish those that have renounced the fruit from the unrenouncing, and establish their superiority over the latter.

The word 'Sannyāsinām' in this verse stands for those Karmayogis who have completely renounced the feeling of mineness, attachment and desire in respect of actions and their fruit, who have been referred to under the name of 'Tyāgi' in verse 10 above, and termed both as a 'Sannyāsi' and a 'Yogi' in the opening verse of Chapter VI, and who are shown in verse 51 of Chapter II to attain the supreme blissful state.

Whatever actions are performed by such men of renunciation are like fried seeds; they are incapable of bearing fruit. And such disinterested actions performed for the sake of sacrifice also neutralize all good and evil actions performed in previous lives (IV. 23). Hence none of their actions performed in this life or in lives that have gone by ever yield any fruit either here or hereafter, under any circumstances; they are completely rid of the bondage of actions.

In the opening verse of this chapter Arjuna requested the Lord to expound the truth of San̄nyāsa and Tyāga separately. In response to this prayer the Lord stated in verses 2 and 3 the diverse views of different sages on this question and explained at full length the truth of Tyāga or Karmayoga as understood by Him in verses 4 to 12. Now, in order to expound the truth of San̄nyāsa or Sāṅkhyayoga, the Lord first of all mentions five factors contributory to the accomplishment of actions from the Sāṅkhya point of view.

पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।

सांख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्ध्ये सर्वकर्मणाम् ॥ १३ ॥

महाबाहो O mighty-armed one, Arjuna; सर्वकर्मणाम् सिद्ध्ये towards the accomplishment of all actions; एतानि these, the following; पञ्च five; कारणानि factors or contributory causes; कृतान्ते prescribing means for neutralizing all actions; सांख्ये in the branch of learning known by the name of Sāṅkhya; प्रोक्तानि have been mentioned; मे from Me; निबोध know (them).

In the branch of learning known by the name of Sāṅkhya, which prescribes means for neutralizing all actions, these five factors have been mentioned as contributory to the accomplishment of all actions; know them from Me, Arjuna. (13)

The compound word 'Sarvakarmanām' in this verse covers all actions, whether they are enjoined by the Sāstras or prohibited by them.

'Sāṅkhya' means knowledge. The word has been derived from the root 'Khyā' (to know) with 'Sam' prefixed to it. It is etymologically explained as under: सम्यक् दृशयते शयते परमात्मा अनेन इति सांख्यं तत्त्वज्ञानम् ('Sāṅkhya' is the means of knowing God in reality; hence it means true wisdom.) Therefore, the word 'Sāṅkhya' qualified,

by the adjective 'Kṛtānte', refers to that branch of knowledge which teaches Jñānayoga or the means of true Knowledge, and which tells us the process of neutralizing all actions, viz., viewing all actions as being performed by Prakṛti or Nature and the Self as wholly inactive. The five factors declared as contributory to the accomplishment of all actions—which conjointly operate to produce an action—are also intended to establish the non-doership of the Self.

The Lord now enumerates the five factors:—

अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।

विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥ १४ ॥

अत्र in this matter, *i. e.*, operating towards the accomplishment of actions; अधिष्ठानम् the seat (of action); तथा and; कर्ता the agent; च and; पृथग्विधम् of different kinds; करणम् the organs; च and; विविधाः of various kinds; पृथक् चेष्टाः separate movements; च and; एव likewise; पञ्चमम् the fifth (is); दैवम् destiny.

The following are the factors operating towards the accomplishment of actions, *viz.*, the seat of action and the agent, the organs of different kinds and the separate movements of divergent types; and the fifth is Daiva or destiny. (14)

The word 'Adhiṣṭhānam' in this verse primarily denotes the seat of activity, as well as of the organs, *viz.*, the body; while in the secondary sense it can also be taken to refer to the earth's surface, which serves as the ground on which various actions forming part of a sacrifice are performed.

The word 'Kartā' (agent) stands for the soul as rooted in Matter. It is this very soul that has been spoken of as the enjoyer in verse 21 of Chapter XIII and as one deluded by egotism, in verse 27 of Chapter III.

Mind, intellect and the ego are internal organs; while the five senses of perception and the five organs of action—these ten are the external instruments. Besides these, the ladle etc., which are helpful in the performance of a sacrifice etc., are all included in the external instruments.

Even so whatever diverse media or accessories are employed for the performance of various actions are covered by the words "Prthagvidham Karaṇam".

Moving from one place to another, exerting one's hands, feet and other limbs, the acts of inhalation and exhalation, drawing together and stretching one's limbs, closing and opening one's eyes and indulging in speculations of various kinds—these and other activities of divergent types are what have been spoken of here as "Vividhāḥ prthak cheṣṭāḥ".

The word 'Daivam' in this verse stands for the latencies of past actions, both good and evil; 'Prārabdha' or destiny is also included in it. Many people call it Adṛṣṭa or the unseen destiny. The adjective 'Pañchamam' has been added to it in order to show that this completes the number, *viz.*, five.

शरीरवाङ्मनोभिर्यत्कर्म प्रारभते नरः ।

न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चैते तस्य हेतवः ॥ १५ ॥

नरः man; शरीरवाङ्मनोभिः with the mind, speech and body; न्याय्यम् right; वा or; विपरीतम् otherwise; वा even; यत् whatever; कर्म action; प्रारभते undertakes, performs; तस्य thereof; एते these; पञ्च five; हेतवः (are) the contributory causes.

These five are the contributory causes of whatever action, right or wrong, man performs with the mind, speech and body. (15)

The use of the word 'Narah' in this verse is intended to convey that it is in the human body alone that the soul is free to perform fresh actions of a virtuous or sinful type. All other species of life are meant for pleasurable and painful

experiences alone; in them one has to reap the consequences of one's past actions and is denied freedom of will.

The word 'Śarira' forming part of the compound word 'Śariravāṅgmanobhiḥ', stands for the physical body including the senses, while 'Manas' covers all the aspects of the mind or the internal organ.

Sacrifice, charity, austerity, study, warfare, agriculture, rearing of cows, trade, service and all other duties enjoined by the Śāstras as binding on a man according to his grade in society, stage in life, temperament and circumstances, and performed in a righteous manner, are covered by the adjective 'Nyāyāyam'.

Similarly, acts which have been forbidden by the Śāstras for some classes of men in view of their grade in society

etc., and all other sinful acts which run counter to the principles of morality and religion, such as lying, thieving, adultery, violence, drinking, and taking prohibited food, belong to the category of unrighteous acts.

The word 'Karma', qualified by the relative adjective 'Yat', covers all actions, both good and evil, the fruits of which have to be reaped here or hereafter. None of these actions can be accomplished without the joint operation of the above five factors. The co-operation of all these is essential for the performance of any action whatsoever. If any of these five is missing, no action can be possible. That is why it has been stated in verse 17 below that action which is performed without any conscious agent is no action at all.

Having thus enumerated the five factors, Adhiṣṭhāna etc., contributory to the accomplishment of all actions according to the Sāṅkhya point of view, the Lord now first denounces those who recognize the Self as the doer. This He does in order to impress upon Arjuna that, really speaking, the Self has nothing to do with actions and that it is absolutely untainted, immutable and a non-doer.

तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः ।

पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वाच्च स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥ १६ ॥

तु but; एवं सति notwithstanding this; यः who; अकृतबुद्धित्वात् owing to an impure intellect; तत्र in that matter, i. e., towards the accomplishment of actions; केवलम् आत्मानम् the absolute (untainted) Self; कर्तारम् as the doer; पश्यति views; सः that; दुर्मतिः man of perverse understanding; न not; पश्यति views (aright).

Notwithstanding this, however, he who, having an impure mind, regards the absolute, taintless Self alone as the doer, that man of perverse understanding does not view aright. (16)

As has been shown in the preceding verses, it is the five factors mentioned above, viz., Adhiṣṭhāna etc., that contribute to the accomplishment of all actions; the Self has really nothing to do with them. Hence it is quite absurd to regard the Self as the doer. Nevertheless, people foolishly

arrogate to themselves the doership of actions; how strange is that ! This is what is sought to be conveyed by the words 'Evam Sati'.

The ignorant man of the world, whose intellect has not been purified through

association with holy men and the study of scriptures, and through spiritual practices such as discrimination, reflection and control of mind and body etc. is referred to here as 'Akṛtabuddhi'. The use of the ablative form 'Akṛtabuddhitvāt' is intended to show why people regard the Self as the doer. The idea is that even though, really speaking, the Self has nothing to do with actions, yet, through lack of discrimination man ignorantly embraces the belief that the Self is the doer.

The adjective 'Kevalam' used with reference to 'Ātmānam', is intended to reveal the true character of the Self, which is 'absolute', i. e., absolutely pure, immutable and unattached. Śrutis also proclaim that "the Self is, really speaking, altogether unattached."* (Bṛhad., Up., IV. iii. 15-16.) Hence it is quite preposterous to connect the Self, which is unattached, with actions and regard it as the doer.

The word 'Durmatih' has been used to reveal that the reason of the man who views the Self as the doer is perverted, that he lacks the capacity to realize the essential character of the Self. The truly discerning man is he who views all actions as a game of Prakṛti and the Self as a non-doer in every sense, as declared in verse 26 of Chapter XIII. As against this, he who regards the Self as the doer is deluded by ignorance and egotism (III. 27); hence his view is not correct but erroneous.

Here it will be seen that of the five factors declared as contributory to the accomplishment of actions, four are products of Prakṛti, while the fifth, viz.,

the agent, is no other than the Self rooted in Prakṛti. In the above exposition, however, it is stated that the Self is not the doer, but unattached. How are we to reconcile these two self-contradictory statements? In this connection it should be noted that, really speaking, the Self is eternal, pure, enlightened, immutable and wholly unattached; it has nothing to do with Prakṛti, objects born of Prakṛti, or actions. But due to nescience, that has existed from time without beginning, the unattached Self has been connected as it were with Prakṛti; therefore, falsely identifying itself with the acts performed by Prakṛti, it arrogates to itself the doership of those actions. The Self which thus claims to be the doer is known as 'Prakṛtistha Puruṣa' (the Self rooted in Prakṛti); it is only when it arrogates to itself the doership of actions that they are known by the name of 'Karma' and bear fruit. That is why the Prakṛtistha Puruṣa has to take birth in good and evil wombs and to reap the consequences of those actions (XIII. 21). Therefore, the 'Kartā' or agent, mentioned in verse 14 above as one of the five factors contributory to the accomplishment of actions, is the Prakṛtistha Puruṣa; whereas the present verse speaks of the absolute, i. e., unattached and untainted Self. Hence by declaring it as the non-doer the Lord has stated its real character. The fifth factor, viz., the agent, is no longer present in the actions of the man who has realized the true nature of the Self. That is why his actions cease to be known as 'Karma'. It is this very idea that has been brought out in the next verse.

Denouncing the man who views the Self as the doer, in order to inculcate the truth that the Self is absolutely untainted, immutable and a non-doer, the Lord now extols him who, having realized the true nature of the Self, views it as a non-doer.

यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते ।

हत्वापि स इमाल्लोकान्न हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥ १७ ॥

यस्य in whose mind; अहंकृतः भावः the notion that "I am the doer"; न does not exist; यस्य whose; बुद्धिः reason; न not; लिप्यते is tainted (by thoughts of mundane objects and activities); सः he; इमान् all (these); लोकान् creatures; हत्वा having slaughtered; अपि even; न neither; हन्ति (really) kills; न nor; निबध्यते is bound (by sin).

He whose mind is free from the sense of doership, and whose reason is not tainted by worldly objects and activities, does not really slay, even having slaughtered all these creatures, nor is bound by sin. (17)

The relative pronoun 'Yasya' in this verse refers to the Sāṅkhyayogī (the practisant treading the path of Knowledge) who views all actions as a game of Prakṛti. No longer regarding the body as his self, such a man altogether ceases to be the doer. That is to say, he no longer entertains to the least degree the sense of doership or duty in respect of any action whatsoever performed by the mind, senses and the body. This is what is meant by the words 'Na Ahankṛtaḥ Bhāvaḥ'.

The Sāṅkhyayogī further ceases to entertain the feeling of mineness, attachment and desire in respect of actions and their fruit in the shape of wife, progeny, wealth, house, honour, fame, heavenly bliss and other objects of this world and the next. He disclaims connection with any action whatsoever or its fruit; and inasmuch as he comes to realize all actions and objects as momentary, perishable and unreal like the actions and enjoyments of a dream, they hardly leave any impression on their mind. This is what is meant by the clause 'Buddhiḥ na lipyate'.

Thus it is clear that, inasmuch as the Sāṅkhyayogī comes to realize in the aforesaid manner the essential character of the Self, egotism or the feeling of 'I', which is born of ignorance, entirely disappears from his mind; and since he no longer entertains the feeling of 'I' and 'mine' in respect of the mind, intellect,

senses and body, he ceases to have the least connection with the actions performed by them or with the fruit of those actions. It, therefore, follows that the actions that are performed by his mind, intellect and senses in the interest of the world order and due to the impulse of his Prārabdha or destiny are all in accord with the Śāstras, and beneficent to all. For the feeling of 'I' and 'mine', attachment and selfishness having disappeared, there remains no incentive to the perpetration of sinful acts. Therefore, just as when any living being meets its death due to its Prārabdha or destiny through the agency of fire, air and water etc., neither are the latter held responsible for the death of that living being nor are they bound by that action, even so the exalted soul mentioned above, while discharging his sacred obligations in the eyes of the world, is not held responsible for his deeds nor gets bound by their fruit even if he carries out the hard-hearted duties of a Kṣatriya—exterminates the whole creation according to the exigencies of the moment—much less when he performs noble acts such as sacrifice, charity and austerity. That is to say, even though he performs all sorts of actions, he remains absolutely free from their binding effect.

The idea is that just as God, even though carrying on the functions of creation, maintenance and destruction etc. of the whole universe, is really speaking not the doer in respect of these functions

(IV. 13), and has nothing to do with them (IV. 14; IX. 9), even so the Sāṅkhyayogī has no connection whatsoever with the actions performed by his mind, intellect and senses. Of course, since he has attained utmost purity of heart and has become entirely free from the feelings of 'I' and 'mine', attachment and selfishness, his mind, intellect and senses are incapable of entertaining likes and dislikes, as well as of sinful acts such as thieving, adultery, lying, violence, duplicity, hypocrisy etc.; all his activities are in accord with the Śāstras and in keeping with his grade in society, stage in life and circumstances. And this imposes no strain on him inasmuch as it becomes a habit with him.

Having thus established the non-doership of the Self in order to expound the truth of Sannyāsa (Sāṅkhyayoga), the Lord now enumerates the factors which motivate action as well as the constituents of action in order to give a clear idea of the constituents of action from the point of view of Sāṅkhyayoga.

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना ।

करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः ॥ १८ ॥

परिज्ञाता the knower (the subject); ज्ञानम् knowledge; ज्ञेयम् (and) the object of knowledge; त्रिविधा threefold; कर्मचोदना (is) that which motivates action; कर्ता (even so) the doer; करणम् the organs; कर्म (and) action; इति thus; त्रिविधः of three kinds; कर्मसंग्रहः (are) the constituents of action.

The knower, knowledge and the object of knowledge—these three motivate action. Even so the doer, the organs and activity—these are the three constituents of action. (18)

'Parijñātā' or the knower is he who ascertains the essential character of an object; the faculty of mind by which he does so is called 'Jñāna' or knowledge and the object whose essential character he ascertains is called 'Jñeya'. These three, taken together, motivate action; in other words, these three goad man to action. For it is only when a qualified man concludes with his cognitive faculty that he has to perform such and such action in such and such manner with the help of such and such materials, that he feels impelled to act.

The soul rooted in Prakṛti, who performs the acts of perceiving, hearing, grasping with the mind, recollecting, eating, drinking and all other functions

is called 'Kartā' or the agent; the mind, intellect and the senses with the instrumentality of which he carries on all these functions are known by the name of 'Karaṇa' and all these functions are spoken of as 'Karma'. It is these three factors which combine to produce an action. For 'Karma' is accomplished only when man himself assumes the role of an agent and performs an action with the instrumentality of the mind, intellect and senses; no Karma is possible without this. Of the five factors mentioned in verse 14 above as contributory to the accomplishment of actions, the middle three, excluding Adhiṣṭhāna and Daiva, have been given the name of Karma-sangraha (constituents of action); for of the five factors these three are the foremost.

Having thus enumerated the three factors which motivate action as well as the three constituents of action from the Sāṅkhya point of view, the Lord now picks up, from among these six, Jñāna, Karma and Kartā and undertakes to classify them in their order of sequence under three heads, viz., Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic, in order that one may choose the Sattvic traits, which are helpful to the realization of Truth, and reject the Rajasic and Tamasic, which are prejudicial to it.

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधैव गुणभेदतः ।

प्रोच्यते गुणसंख्याने यथावच्छृणु तान्यपि ॥ १९ ॥

गुणसंख्याने in the branch of knowledge which deals with the Guṇas; ज्ञानम् knowledge; च and; कर्म action; च as well as; कर्ता the doer; गुणभेदतः due to difference of qualities; त्रिधा of three kinds; एव only; प्रोच्यते has been declared; तानि them; अपि too; यथावत् duly; शृणु hear (from Me).

In the branch of knowledge dealing with the Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti, knowledge and action as well as the doer have been declared to be of three kinds according to the Guṇa which predominates in each; hear them too duly from Me. (19)

The branch of knowledge which classifies all objects under different heads according as Sattva, Rajas or Tamas preponderates in them is referred to here as 'Guṇasankhyāne'. By inviting Arjuna to hear the threefold division of Jñāna, Karma and Kartā based on the predominance of the three Guṇas, the Lord shows His regard for that branch of knowledge.

that the knower and the doer are not two separate entities; that is why the Lord has omitted to classify the knower separately. And the threefold division of 'Karaṇa' or the organs will follow under the names of Buddhi (reason) and Dhṛti (firmness), and that of the object of knowledge under the name of Sukha. That is the reason why the Lord has indicated His intention here to classify in the first instance only three out of the six factors mentioned in the preceding verse.

It should be noted in this connection

As the Lord had undertaken to classify in their order of sequence Jñāna, Karma and Kartā, the Lord now begins with a definition of the Sattvic type of Jñāna.

सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते ।

अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥ २० ॥

येन by which (knowledge); विभक्तेषु सर्वभूतेषु in all beings taken severally; एकम् one; अव्ययम् imperishable; भावम् (divine) existence; अविभक्तम् undivided, uniformly present; ईक्षते (man) perceives; तत् that; ज्ञानम् knowledge; सात्त्विकम् Sattvic; विद्धि know,

That by which man perceives one imperishable divine existence as undivided and equally present in all individual beings, know that knowledge to be Sattvic. (20)

The relative pronoun 'Yena' in this verse stands for that realization, following from the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga, which has been referred to in VI. 29 and XIII. 27. And just as the man who knows the truth about ether perceives the same ether in a jar, a house, a cave, in the celestial plane as well as in the nether world, nay, in the whole universe including all objects, even so he who views all living beings, appearing as distinct from one another in the eyes of

the world, as well as his own self as no other than God Himself, is said to perceive one divine existence as undivided among individual beings.

By calling this realization as Sattvic the Lord intends to convey that such knowledge is the only real knowledge, while all other worldly knowledge is only nominal and not real, so that a man who seeks blessedness should strive to acquire this knowledge alone.

The Lord now proceeds to define Rajasic knowledge.

पृथक्त्वेन तु यज्ज्ञानं नानाभावान् पृथग्विधान् ।

वेत्ति सर्वेषु भूतेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि राजसम् ॥ २१ ॥

तु but; यत् the knowledge which; सर्वेषु भूतेषु in all beings; पृथग्विधान् of diverse kinds; नानाभावान् manifold existences; पृथक्त्वेन as apart from one another; वेत्ति cognizes; तत् that; ज्ञानम् knowledge; राजसम् Rajasic; विद्धि know.

That, however, by which man cognizes many existences of various kinds as apart from one another in all beings, know that knowledge to be Rajasic. (21)

The man referred to in the present verse believes that there are as many souls as there are bodies, one in each, and that they are all distinct from one another, even as every living being has a distinct shape and form and a temperament peculiarly its own. This is what is meant by cognizing manifold existences of various kinds as apart from one another in all beings.

The idea is that the man who has no knowledge of the truth about ether

thinks that each jar or house has its own limited ether and associating it with the agreeable or foul smell existing therein regards each tract of ether as apart from another. This belief of his is, however, erroneous. Even so the belief that there are as many souls as there are bodies, each in one, is misleading. This is what is meant by calling this knowledge as Rajasic. Rajasic knowledge is no real knowledge, it is knowledge only in name.

The Lord now defines Tamasic knowledge.

यत्तु कृत्स्नवदेकस्मिन् कार्ये सक्रमहेतुकम् ।

अतत्त्वार्थवदल्पं च तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ २२ ॥

तु but; यत् (the knowledge) which; एकस्मिन् कार्ये to one (body, which is an) effect; कृत्स्नवत् as if it were the whole; सक्तम् clings; अहैतुकम् (and is) irrational; अतत्त्वार्थवत् without any real object; च and; अल्पम् trivial or of little value; तत् that; तामसम् Tamasic; उदाहृतम् has been spoken of as.

Again, that knowledge which clings to one body as if it were the whole, and which is irrational, has no real object and is trivial, has been declared as Tamasic. (22)

The particle 'Tu' in this verse is intended to convey that this knowledge is of a much lower order than the Sattvic and Rajasic types of knowledge defined in the preceding verses.

The first half of this verse represents the main characteristic of Tamasic knowledge. The idea is that the perverted knowledge through which man comes to regard the body, which is an evolute of matter, as his own Self and, clinging to this belief, remains attached to his ephemeral and perishable body as his all, that is to say, identifies himself with its joys and sorrows and looks upon its destruction as his utter ruin, and fails to recognize the Self as distinct from the body or all-pervading, is no knowledge in the real acceptation of the term. Hence the Lord has not even mentioned the word 'Jñāna' in this verse; for this perverted form of knowledge is really the same as ignorance.

The use of the adjective 'Ahaitukam'

(irrational) with reference to this knowledge is intended to convey that a reasonable man will hardly entertain such a view; even a man of small understanding is able to distinguish between the material body and the conscious Self by exercising his judgment; hence such a perverted knowledge cannot exist where there is reason and a critical sense.

That which is perceived or apprehended through this knowledge is not real; that is to say, this knowledge does not represent an object in its real character. Hence it is a perverted form of knowledge and very insignificant; that is why it is worth discarding. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the adjectives 'Atattvārthavat' and 'Alpam.'

Such is the perverted form of knowledge or belief entertained by men of a grossly Tamasic disposition. That is but natural to them inasmuch as ignorance has been said to be an offspring of Tamoguna.

The Lord now characterizes Sattvic action.

नियतं सङ्गरहितमरागद्वेषतः कृतम् ।

अफलप्रेप्सुना कर्म यत्तत्सत्त्विकमुच्यते ॥ २३ ॥

यत् कर्म the action which; नियतम् is ordained (by the scriptures); सङ्गरहितम् is not accompanied with the sense of doership; अफलप्रेप्सुना by him who seeks no return; अरागद्वेषतः without any partiality or prejudice; कृतम् has been done; तत् that; सत्त्विकम् Sattvic; उच्यते is called.

That action which is ordained by the scriptures and is not accompanied

by the sense of doership, and has been done without any partiality or prejudice by one who seeks no return, is called Sattvic. (23)

Sacrifice, charity and austerity, vocational duties and bodily functions and all other noble acts enjoined by the scriptures as binding on a particular man with due regard to his grade in society, stage in life, temperament and circumstances, are referred to here as 'Niyatam Karma'. The use of the participial adjective 'Niyatam' is intended to convey that only such obligatory duties as have been enjoined by the scriptures, and are required to be performed either daily or on special occasions, can be Sattvic in character; those that have been prohibited or are motivated by desire cannot belong to this category.

The noun 'Sanga', forming part of the compound adjective 'Sangarahitam', has not been used in the sense of attachment in this verse; for absence of attachment has been included in the phrase 'Arāga-dweṣataḥ Kṛtam'. The word 'Sanga' should, therefore, be interpreted to mean the feeling of identification that one develops with regard to one's actions by claiming their doership. Hence 'Sangarahitam' should be taken to refer to such actions as are performed without the sense of doership and without identifying oneself with one's body. Hence the use of this adjective is intended to show that even the aforesaid duties that have been enjoined by the Śāstras are Sattvic only when they are 'Sangarahita', and not otherwise.

The compound adjective 'Aphalaprepsunā' stands for the unselfish man who, having ceased to entertain the feeling of mineness and attachment in respect of all enjoyments of this world and the next, obtained as a reward for one's actions, no longer cherishes the least craving for those

enjoyments, who does not seek to attain any selfish end of his through any action whatsoever, who does not need any object for himself.

The present verse shows that that action alone is perfectly Sattvic, which answers all the qualifications mentioned above. If any of these characteristics is missing in a particular action, its Sattvic character should be regarded as wanting to that extent. Besides this, it should also be taken to mean that Jñāna or realization follows from the quality of Sattva and Sattvic actions alone; hence men who seek to know the truth about God should perform Sattvic actions alone, and should not court bondage by performing Rajasic and Tamasic actions.

Here it should be noted that the present verse defines Sattvic action from the point of view of Sāṅkhyayoga; hence it precludes the sense of doership by the term 'Sangarahitam' and the feeling of attraction and aversion too by the word 'Arāga-dweṣataḥ'. In verse 9, however, Sattvic Tyāga has been declared to consist merely in giving up attachment and the craving for fruit of actions, performed from the point of view of Karmayoga. Hence there is no mention of the absence of doership in that verse; on the other hand, it advises the performance of actions as a matter of duty. Here lies the difference between Sattvic Karma and Sattvic Tyāga as defined in the two verses. God-Realization through Knowledge of Truth is the reward of both; hence there is no real difference between the two, the difference lies only in their mode of practice.

The Lord now defines Rajasic action.

यत्तु कामेप्सुना कर्म साहंकारेण वा पुनः ।
क्रियते बहुलयासं तद्राजसमुदाहृतम् ॥ २४ ॥

तु but; यत् कर्म the action which; बहुलायासम् involving much strain or exertion; पुनः and; कामेप्सुना by a man seeking enjoyments; वा or; साहंकारेण by him who is full of egotism; क्रियते is performed; तत् that; राजसम् Rajasic; उदाहृतम् has been spoken of (as).

That action, however, which involves much strain and is performed by one who seeks enjoyments or by a man full of egotism, has been spoken of as Rajasic. (24)

The words 'Bahulāyāsam Karma' refer to those desire-born and worldly undertakings for which many activities of diverse kinds have been prescribed, and which due to the feeling of identification with one's body one accomplishes with great exertion and grudge regarding them as a burden. The use of the compound adjective 'Bahulāyāsam' is intended to distinguish the Rajasic from the Sattvic type of actions. The idea is that the doer of Sattvic actions does not identify himself with his body and has no sense of doership in respect of his actions; hence he does not feel the least exertion or hardship in performing any action whatsoever. Therefore, his actions do not involve any strain. The doer of Rajasic actions, however, does identify himself with the body, hence the toil and hardships involved in his actions make him unhappy; that is why he feels the strain while performing every action. Besides this, the doer of Sattvic actions confines himself to those duties alone which fall to his lot from the sacred or secular point of view; hence he does not expand his activities. But the doer of Rajasic actions continues to undertake new enterprises every day, hence the scope of his activities gets much enlarged. That is another reason why acts of weary toil have been declared as Rajasic.

The compound word 'Kāmeṣṣunā' stands for the self-centred man who ever goes

on craving for enjoyments of various kinds, entertaining as he does the feeling of mineness and attachment in respect of them, and who does everything for the sake of enjoyments of this world and the next, such as wife, progeny, wealth, house, honour, fame, prestige etc.

The use of the disjunctive particle 'Vā' in this verse is intended to convey that not only those actions which aim at the acquisition of objects of enjoyment but even those which, though not motivated by the desire for enjoyments, are prompted by egotism are Rajasic in character. The idea is that even those actions which are tainted by either of these two evils, viz., the craving for enjoyment and egotism, are Rajasic, much more those which are characterized by both.

The word 'Sāhankāreṇa' stands for the man who not only identifies himself with the body but all whose actions are prompted by egotism, nay, who claims the doership of actions, regards himself as nonpareil and makes much of his capabilities and is also given to bragging.

It has already been stated that Rajasic actions yield a crop of sorrow (XIV. 16) and that the quality of Rajas binds man through attachment to actions (XIV. 7); hence a seeker of liberation should never perform such actions. This is what is meant by calling the above actions Rajasic.

The Lord now characterizes Tamasic action.

अनुबन्धं क्षयं हिंसामनवेक्ष्य च पौरुषम् ।
मोहादारभ्यते कर्म यत्तत्तामसमुच्यते ॥ २५ ॥

यत् कर्म the action which; अनुबन्धम् the upshot; क्षयम् loss (to oneself); हिसाम् injury to others; च and; पौष्ट्यम् one's own capacity; अनवेक्ष्य not counting; मोहात् through (sheer) ignorance; आरभ्यते is undertaken; तत् that; तामसम् Tamasic; उच्यते is spoken of.

That action which is undertaken through sheer ignorance, without counting the upshot, loss to oneself, injury to others and one's own capacity, is declared as Tamasic. (25)

Before launching an enterprise a man should exercise his own judgment and foresee its consequences, viz., whether it will lead to happiness or sorrow. Again, he should consider what will it cost him in the shape of money, bodily strength and time, to what extent it will interfere with Dharma or piety and what other losses it will entail. Thirdly, he should foresee in what way and to what extent it will cause hardship to other human beings or creatures and involve destruction of human or other lives. And, fourthly, he should form an estimate of the capacity that will be required for accomplishing it and consider whether he possesses the

requisite capacity. A Tamasic action is that which does not take into account all these considerations and is undertaken in a reckless spirit. This is what the Lord seeks to convey in the present verse.

Inspired as it is by ignorance, which is a product of Tamoguna, such a rash act is called Tamasic. And it has already been stated (XIV. 18) that a Tamasic action leads to Ajñāna, i. e., birth in the species of stupid creatures, such as swine, dogs, plants etc., or condemnation to hell. Hence those seeking beatitude should never undertake such an act.

The Lord now defines a Kartā or doer of the Sattvic type.

मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः ।
सिद्धयसिद्धयोर्निर्विकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते ॥ २६ ॥

मुक्तसङ्गः free from attachment; अनहंवादी unegotistic; धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः endowed with firmness and vigour; सिद्धयसिद्धयोः in success and failure; निर्विकारः free from morbid feelings (such as delight and grief etc.); कर्ता a doer; सात्त्विकः Sattvic (in character); उच्यते is spoken of (as).

Free from attachment, unegotistic, endowed with firmness and vigour and unswayed by success and failure—such a doer is said to be Sattvic. (26)

'Muktasangah' is he who has ceased to have any connection whatsoever with actions and their fruit. That is to say, he no longer entertains the least feeling of mineness, attachment and desire in respect of whatever is done by the mind, senses and body, or with regard to its fruit in the shape of honour, fame, prestige, wife,

progeny, wealth, house and other enjoyments of this world and the next.

Again, 'Anahamvādi' is he who, having ceased to identify himself with the mind, intellect, senses and body, which are other than the Self, does not claim the doership in respect of any actions. He, there-

fore, never boasts, like men possessing a demoniac disposition, of his having realized a particular end, nor advertises his future designs. He does not claim to be "the lord, the enjoyer, a mighty and happy man, having no compeer" nor proclaims his intention to perform sacrifices and bestow gifts (XVI. 13-15) but talks in an unaffected and unegotistic strain.

He who does not lose his balance of mind even when confronted with the greatest obstacles and difficulties while discharging any sacred obligation is called 'Dhṛtisamanvitah'; while 'Utsāhasamanvitah' is he who is not deterred by failure or by the thought that a man having no desire for fruit need not engage in action, but who is devoutly eager to continue his efforts even as one who has achieved success or like one who seeks some reward for his actions. A man who is endowed with both these virtues, namely, firmness and zeal, does not shirk his duty even when faced with the heaviest odds, but diligently pursues it through thick and thin, surmounting all difficulties. These constitute the distinguishing marks of such a man.

Ordinary men of the world are overjoyed on the completion of an undertaking to which they feel attached and which they look upon as a means to the realization of their desired end; even so they feel very miserable when it is interrupted and left half finished. Similarly, the success and failure of an undertaking awaken morbid feelings of various other kinds in their heart. Therefore, that man of an unruffled temperament who, having no feeling of 'I' and 'mine', attachment and the desire for fruit, neither exults over the accomplishment of an action nor grieves over its interruption and who is subject to no other morbid feeling either, that is to say, who remains equipoised under every circumstance and at all times, is called 'Siddhyasiddhyoḥ Nirvikārah'.

He alone who possesses all the above qualifications is a perfectly Sattvic doer; his Sattvic nature will be found wanting to the extent he lacks these qualifications. Such Sattvic traits manifest the hidden light of God, hence a seeker of liberation should imbibe the virtues of a Sattvic doer.

The Lord now defines a doer of the Rajasic type.

रागी कर्मफलप्रेप्सुर्लुब्धो हिंसात्मकोऽशुचिः ।

हर्षशोकान्वितः कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ २७ ॥

रागी passionate or full of attachment; कर्मफलप्रेप्सुः seeking the fruit of actions; लुब्धः (and) greedy; हिंसात्मकः oppressive by nature; अशुचिः of impure conduct; हर्षशोकान्वितः (and) affected by joy and sorrow; कर्ता a doer; राजसः Rajasic in character; परिकीर्तितः has been spoken of (as).

The doer who is full of attachment, seeks the fruit of actions and is greedy, and who is oppressive by nature and of impure conduct, and is affected by joy and sorrow, has been called Rajasic. (27)

He who entertains a feeling of mineness and attachment in respect of actions and their fruit in the shape of enjoyments of this world and the next, that is to say, who remains attached to

whatever action he performs as well as to its fruit, is called a 'Rāgi'.

He who goes on craving for wife, progeny, wealth, house, honour, fame, prestige and various other enjoy-

ments of this world and the next, and does everything with a view to attaining these enjoyments alone, such a self-centred man is called 'Karmaphalaprepsuh'.

The greedy man who on account of his attachment to wealth and other possessions refuses to spend money according to his means even in a legitimate cause and cherishes an ardent longing for amassing wealth by fair means or foul, and who even seeks to usurp the rights of others and strives to that end, is called 'Lubdhah'.

He who is habitually disposed to inflict suffering on others, by whatever means it may be possible, who cares not the least for the hardship of others while striving for the realization of his own ambitions, his actions being inspired by likes and dislikes, and who continues to oppress others for the sake of his own comfort and enjoyment, such a cruel man is called 'Himsātmakah'.

He who has no regard for personal cleanliness and morality, that is to say,

who neither cleans his body and clothes etc. by the use of water and earth etc. nor maintains the purity of his conduct through propriety of behaviour, but who gives up cleanliness and right conduct with a view to attaining enjoyments of various kinds due to attachment for the same, is called 'Aśuchiḥ'.

'Harṣāśokānvitah' is he who is now filled with delight and now plunged in grief in course of every activity and at every event, that is to say, whose mind is swayed by joy and grief at every step inasmuch as he cherishes a feeling of attraction and aversion towards every action and its fruit.

A doer who is possessed of any of the above characteristics belongs to the category of a Rajasic doer; and a Rajasic doer undergoes repeated births and deaths in different species of life, he does not escape from the whirligig of mundane existence. Hence a seeker of liberation should not allow himself to be a Rajasic doer.

The Lord now points out the characteristics of a Tamasic doer.

अयुक्तः प्राकृतः स्तब्धः शठो नैष्कृतिकोऽलसः ।

विषादी दीर्घसूत्री च कर्ता तामस उच्यते ॥ २८ ॥

अयुक्तः lacking self-control and piety; प्राकृतः uncultured, vulgar; स्तब्धः arrogant; शठः deceitful; नैष्कृतिकः robbing others of their livelihood; अलसः slothful; विषादी down-hearted; च and; दीर्घसूत्री procrastinating; कर्ता doer; तामसः (as) Tamasic; उच्यते is declared.

Lacking piety and self-control, uncultured, arrogant, deceitful, inclined to rob others of their livelihood, slothful, down-hearted and procrastinating, such a doer is called Tamasic. (28)

'Ayuktah' is he who has not been able to subdue his mind and senses, but on the other hand, who is under the control of his mind and senses, and who is lacking in faith and piety.

He who is naturally dull-witted and has not received good education, who

possesses a childish nature, who has no knowledge of his duty (XVI. 7) and whose mind and senses have not been improved by culture, is referred to here as 'Prākṛtah'.

The arrogant man who is very hard-hearted by nature, who has no element of humility in him, and who is ever

intoxicated with pride, is called 'Stabdha'.

The crafty swindler who secretly harms others, concealing his malicious intentions, and is ever contriving plans to do them an ill turn, is referred to here as 'Sāthah'.

'Naiṣkrtikah' is he who deprives others of their means of subsistence.

The slothful man who is wont to remain lying down all the twenty-four hours, who does not feel inclined or encouraged to perform any sacred or secular duty, and whose mind and senses are ever steeped in indolence, is spoken of here as 'Alasah'.

The down-hearted man who grieves day and night and whose worries know no end (XVI. 11) is called 'Viśādi'.

And he who having taken up some work does not finish it for a long time,—who goes on putting it off from day to day, so that a work which could be finished in one day takes many days and is yet left unfinished, such a man of sluggish habits is called 'Dirghasūtri'.

The evil traits mentioned in the above verse are all products of Tamogūṇa; hence whoever possesses all these characteristics or many of them should be regarded as a doer of the Tamasic type. And men of a Tamasic disposition fall in the scale of spiritual evolution (XIV. 18); they are born in sub-human species of various kinds, such as beasts and birds, insects and moths etc. (XIV. 15). Hence a man seeking beatitude should not allow any of these characteristics to stay in him.

Having thus classified Jñāna, Karma and Kariā in order of sequence out of the factors which motivate action as well as the constituents of action in order that the Sattvic traits, which are helpful to the realization of Truth, may be imbibed and the Rajasic and Tamasic propensities, which are prejudicial to such realization, may be discarded, the Lord now undertakes to classify in their order of sequence Buddhi and Dhṛti under three heads, viz. Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic.

बुद्धेर्मेदं धृतेश्चैव गुणतस्त्रिविधं शृणु ।
प्रोच्यमानमशेषेण पृथक्त्वेन धनंजय ॥ २९ ॥

धनंजय O conqueror of riches, Arjuna; बुद्धेः of Buddhi (reason); च and; धृतेः of Dhṛti (firmness); एव also; गुणतः based on the (predominance of) each Guṇa or mode of Nature; त्रिविधं मेदम् the threefold division; अशेषेण in full; पृथक्त्वेन one by one; प्रोच्यमानम् being told (by Me); शृणु hear.

Now hear, Arjuna, the threefold division, based on the predominance of each Guṇa, of Buddhi and Dhṛti also, which is being told by Me in full one by one. (29)

The word 'Buddhi' in this verse denotes the faculty of determination; it is also called 'Antahkarana' or the internal organ. The Jñāna or knowledge which has been classified under three heads in verses 20, 21 and 22 is a

product or function of Buddhi, which is the source of it. Verse 18 mentions 'Jñāna' as one of the factors that motivate action; while Buddhi has been included in the constituents of action under the name of 'Karana' or instrument.

This constitutes the difference between Buddhi and Jñāna. The following verses classify Buddhi, which is the chief Karana or instrument, in order to bring out clearly the threefold division of Karanas, which form part of the constituents of action.

'Dhṛti' is the faculty of holding on to a particular pursuit, belief or idea; it is also a function of the intellect. It is through this faculty that a man firmly adheres to a particular activity or idea. Hence it is included in the category of 'Karana'. The word occurs in verse 26

above among the characteristics of a Sattvic doer; this is likely to give the impression that Dhṛti is Sattvic only. But the truth is otherwise; Dhṛti also is of three kinds. It is in order to bring out this truth that 'Dhṛti' has been classified under three heads in the following verses.

The obvious intention of the Lord in classifying both Buddhi and Dhṛti under three heads is to point out that only the Sattvic types of these are worth cultivating, while the Rajasic and Tamasic types are to be given up.

In keeping with His promise to discuss the threefold divisions of Buddhi and Dhṛti, the Lord first of all defines Sattvic Buddhi.

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्याकार्ये भयाभये ।

बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेत्ति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥ ३० ॥

पार्थ O son of Prthā (Kunti), Arjuna; या बुद्धिः the intellect which; प्रवृत्तिम् the path of (right) activity; च and; निवृत्तिम् the path of renunciation; कार्याकार्ये what ought to be done and what should not be done; भयाभये (what is) fear and (what is) fearlessness; च and; बन्धम् (what is) bondage; च and; मोक्षम् (what is) liberation; वेत्ति knows (correctly); सा that (intellect); सात्त्विकी is Sattvic.

The intellect which correctly determines the paths of activity and renunciation, what ought to be done and what should not be done, what is fear and what is fearlessness, and what is bondage and what is liberation, that intellect is Sattvic. (30)

The way to God-Realization is two-fold. The first consists in practising worship of God and performing noble deeds enjoined by the scriptures, such as sacrifice, charity and austerity, vocational duties consistent with one's grade in society and stage in life, and bodily functions such as eating and drinking etc. All this has to be done in a disinterested spirit for the sake of God-Realization while following the rules of any one of the first three Āśramas or stages in life and giving up the feeling of 'I'

and 'mine', attachment and the craving for reward. This is known as the path of activity. And right knowledge of this path consists in forming a correct idea about the same and following it according to the ideal of the ancient kings Janaka and Ambariṣa and that of great sages Vasiṣṭha, Yājñavalkya and so on.

The other path is the path of renunciation. It consists in completely abstaining from all activities and enjoyments both externally and internally

and remaining constantly engaged in hearing, reflection and contemplation or in the adoration and remembrance of God and chanting His names etc. along with the practice of control of mind and the senses, endurance etc., while staying in the fourth Āsrama of Sannyāsa and remaining aloof from all kinds of worldly distractions. Again, all this has to be done for the sake of God-Realization and renouncing the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' as well as attachment. And right knowledge of this path consists in forming a correct notion of it and following it according to the ideals of Sanaka and his three brothers, Nārada, Lord Rṣabhadeva and Śukadeva.

'Kārya' is that which a man ought to do at a particular place and on a particular occasion considering his grade in society, stage in life, temperament and circumstances; and that which should be shunned by him on a particular occasion is 'Akārya' for him. Right knowledge of 'Kārya' and 'Akārya', therefore, consists in correctly determining whether an action one is called upon to perform is worth performing or whether one should abstain from it.

The nervous excitement caused in one's mind by the presence of some disagreeable object or occurrence or by the apprehension of such an occurrence is called 'Bhaya' or fear; and the absence of such a feeling is called 'Abhaya' or fearlessness. Right knowledge of Bhaya and Abhaya, therefore, consists in shaking off fear by knowing the truth of both, i. e., ascertaining the causes which go to make one feel nervous and the way how

to overcome this feeling and attain the state of fearlessness.

The compulsion under which a Jiva or embodied soul has to go through an unending series of births and deaths from time without beginning due to its connection with good or evil actions is called 'Bandha' or bondage. And when all the ties of good and evil Karma that bind a soul are cut asunder by the grace of God through the practice of Karmayoga, Bhaktiyoga, Jñānayoga or any other discipline undertaken as a result of association with holy men, and the soul attains God-Realization, it is said to have achieved Mokṣa or liberation.

The correct knowledge of Bandha consists in grasping the true nature of bondage as defined above and ascertaining the causes which have thrown the Jiva into bondage, as well as the factors which go to tighten this bond and so on; while true knowledge of Mokṣa consists in correctly apprehending what is meant by securing freedom from this bondage and discovering how and by what means it can be secured.

To sum up, the Sattvic type of intellect is that which is capable of correctly determining all these points, which neither errs nor wavers in its judgment on any of these issues—which pronounces its correct verdict on whatever point it is sought. The Sattvic type of intellect frees man from the bondage of mundane existence and leads to the attainment of the supreme state; hence a seeker of blessedness should improve his intellect by cultivation of the above traits and make it Sattvic.

The Lord now defines the Rajasic type of intellect.

यथा धर्ममधर्मं च कार्यं चाकार्यमेव च ।

अयथावद्व्रजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥ ३१ ॥

पार्थ O son of Prthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; यथा by which; धर्मम् what is right; च and; अधर्मम् what is wrong; च as well as; कार्यम् what ought to be

done; च and; अकार्यम् what should not be done; एव also; अयथावत् not as they are; प्रजानाति (man) perceives; सा that; बुद्धिः intellect; राजसी (is) Rajasic.

The intellect by which man does not truly perceive what is Dharma and what is Adharma, what ought to be done and what should not be done,—that intellect is Rajasic. (31)

Virtues like non-violence, truthfulness, and all other noble pursuits enjoined by the Śāstras with due regard to one's grade in society and stage in life—the performance of which, the Śāstras declare, is rewarded with the enjoyments of this world and the next—and acts of benevolence, all agriculture, rearing of cattle and service, these are covered by the term 'Dharma'.

* The Śāstras have glorified Dharma in glowing terms. *Bṛhad-dharma-Purāṇa* has the following:—

Dharma, which protects this universe and has been represented in the form of a bull, is believed to have four legs. In the Satyayuga it is whole with four legs, in the Tretā age the number of its legs is reduced to three, in the Dwāpara it is further reduced to two, while in the Kali age only one leg remains.

The four legs of Dharma are: Truth, Compassion, Tranquillity and Non-violence—

सत्यं दया तथा शान्तिरहिंसा चेति कीर्तिताः । धर्मस्यावयवास्तात चत्वारः पूर्णतां गताः ॥

Of these, Truth presents itself in the following twelve forms:—

अमिथ्यावचनं सत्यं स्वीकारप्रतिपालनम् । प्रियवाक्यं गुरोः सेवा दृढं चैव व्रतं कृतम् ॥

आस्तिक्यं साधुसङ्गश्च पितुर्मातुः प्रियंकरः । शुचित्वं द्विविधं चैव हीरसंचय एव च ॥

“Uttering no untruth, keeping one's promise, speaking agreeable words, service of the preceptor, strict observance of a vow, piety, association with holy men, doing what pleases one's parents, external purity, internal purity, shyness and keeping no possessions.”

Compassion expresses itself in the following six forms:—

परोपकारो दानं च सर्वदा सितभाषणम् । विनयो न्यूनताभावस्वीकारः समतामतिः ॥

“Benevolence, charity, unfailing geniality of speech, meekness, modesty and evenness of temper.”

Tranquillity presents the following thirty characteristics:—

अनसूयास्पर्शतोष इन्द्रियाणां च संयमः । असंगमो मौनमेवं देवपूजाविधौ मतिः ॥

अकृतश्चिद्भयत्वं च गाम्भीर्यं स्थिरचित्तता । अरूक्षभावः सर्वत्र निःस्पृहत्वं दृढा मतिः ॥

विवर्जनं ह्यकार्याणां समः पूजापमानयोः । श्लाघा परगुणेऽस्तेयं ब्रह्मचर्यं धृतिः क्षमा ॥

आतिथ्यं च जपो होमस्तीर्थसेवाऽऽर्यसेवनम् । अमत्सरो बन्धमोक्षज्ञानं संन्यासभावना ॥

सहिष्णुता सुदुःखेषु अकार्पण्यममूर्खता ।

“Absence of a cavilling spirit, contentment with a small amount or quantity, control of the senses, freedom from attachment, taciturnity, devotion to the worship of gods, fearlessness, gravity, steadiness of mind, absence of impassivity, freedom from craving of all sorts, a resolute will, abstaining from prohibited actions, equipoise in honour and ignominy, praising others' virtues, non-thieving, continence, fortitude, forbearance, hospitality, practice of Japa or muttering of mystic formulas, offering oblations into the sacred fire, visiting sacred places, service of noble men, freedom from jealousy, knowledge of bondage and freedom, a spirit of renunciation, endurance even in the face of great calamities, absence of stinginess and absence of dull-wittedness.”

There are seven modes of Ahimsā or Non-violence:—

अहिंसा त्वाप्तनजयः परपीडाविवर्जनम् । श्रद्धा चातिथ्यसेवा च शान्तरूपप्रदर्शनम् ॥

आत्मीयता च सर्वत्र आत्मबुद्धिः परात्मसु ।

That which has been enjoined by the Śāstras as worth performing for a man at a particular time and place with due regard to his grade in society, stage in life, temperament and circumstances, is Kārya for him; while that which has been declared in the Śāstras as not only worth abstaining from or forbidden but as something which must not be performed in any case, is Akārya. Whereas sinful acts prohibited by the Śāstras are worth abstaining from for all, even out of noble acts enjoined by the scriptures some are worth performing for a particular class while others are worth abstaining from for that very class. For example, while service is worth performing for a Śūdra (a member of the labouring class), the performance of sacrifice and study of Vedas etc. are worth shunning for him; while the practice of Viveka (discrimination between real and unreal, eternal and evanescent, matter and spirit etc.), Vairāgya (dispassion), control of the mind and senses and so on are worth performing for a recluse, the performance of sacrifices and practice of charity etc. are worth shunning for him; performing sacrifices and officiating at them, bestowing and accepting gifts, and the study and teaching of the Vedas are worth performing, while service as a means of subsistence is worth abstaining from for the Brahman (a member of the priestly

class); even so for a Vaiśya (a member of the trading class) agriculture, rearing of cows and trade etc. are worth pursuing, while accepting gifts is worth abstaining from. This proves that a particular duty is not worth performing for all simply because it is included in the category of Dharma enjoined by the scriptures. In this way that which is Dharma can be worth performing and worth shunning too. Here lies the difference between Dharma and Kārya, on the one hand, and between Adharma and Akārya, on the other. The intellect which is at a loss to judge whether a particular course of action which a man is required to choose or reject is worth adopting or abstaining from, and to decide what he should do and how and what he should not, is said not to perceive correctly what is Kārya and what is Akārya.

Such an intellect, which is unable to determine the real nature of things, is never established in Viveka and remains distracted and fickle due to its contact with Rajoguṇa; hence it is Rajasic. And a Rajasic tendency is said to result in sorrow; hence he who seeks blessedness should eliminate the Rajasic traits present in one's intellect through association with saints, the study of good books and cherishing noble ideas, and at the same time strive to awaken and foster Sattvic impulses.

The Lord now defines Tamasic Buddhi.

अधर्मं धर्ममिति या मन्यते तमसावृता ।

सर्वार्थान् विपरीतांश्च बुद्धिः सा पार्थ तमसी ॥ ३२ ॥

"Control over one's squatting posture, abstaining from infliction of pain on others through mind, speech or body, piety, hospitality, wearing a look of serenity, regarding all as one's own, and a feeling of oneness with others."

This is Dharma. Even a little practice of this Dharma is supremely beneficial and violation of it is highly detrimental.

यथा स्वल्पमधर्मं हि जनयेत् महाभयम् । स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥

(Ibid., Pūrvakhaṇḍa, I. 47)

"Just as a little deviation from virtue is fraught with great danger, even so a little practice of this Dharma protects from great fear."

Side by side with this Dharma, consisting of four limbs, a man should perform duties consistent with his grade in society and stage in life.

पार्थ O son of Prthā (Kunti), Arjuna; यः which; तमसावृता wrapped in ignorance; बुद्धिः intellect; अधर्मम् (even) Adharma; धर्मम् (it is) Dharma; इति thus; मन्यते imagines; सर्वार्थान् (and sees) all other things; च too; विपरीतान् contrary; सा that (intellect); तमसी (is) Tamasic.

The intellect which imagines even Adharma to be Dharma, and sees all other things upside-down,—wrapped in ignorance, that intellect is Tamasic, Arjuna. (32)

The intellect which regards denunciation of God and other deities, defiance of the authority of the scriptures, disrespect towards one's parents, preceptor and others, violation of the rules of Varna and Āśrama, discontent, hypocrisy, duplicity, adultery, lying, oppressing others, taking prohibited food, acting as one pleases, usurpation of others' rights and other prohibited acts of a sinful nature as acts of virtue is said to mistake Adharma for Dharma. Such an intellect further regards fortitude, forbearance, control of the mind and senses, non-thieving, purity, discernment, right knowledge, truthfulness, absence of anger, worship of God and other deities, study of sacred books, following the rules of Varna and Āśrama, carrying out the behests of one's parents and other superiors, artlessness, continence, taking Sattvic food, non-violence, benevolence and other

virtues enjoined by the scriptures as Adharma. This is equally implied by the first half of this verse, which can be interpreted the other way as well by treating 'Dharmam' as the object and 'Adharmam' as a complement.

Just as this intellect imagines Adharma to be Dharma, even so it mistakes sorrow for joy, the evanescent for the eternal, the impure for the pure, loss for gain, and so on. All these instances of a distorted vision are included in seeing all things upside-down.

In other words, a Tamasic intellect is that which has almost lost its critical faculty, so that its verdict in all matters is warped. This type of intellect brings down the human soul in the scale of spiritual evolution; hence those who seek beatitude should discard such an intellect.

The Lord now defines Sattvic Dhṛti.

धृत्या यया धारयते मनःप्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः ।
योगेनाव्यभिचारिण्या धृतिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥ ३३ ॥

पार्थ O son of Prthā (Kunti), Arjuna; यया अव्यभिचारिण्या धृत्या by which unwavering firmness; योगेन through the Yoga of meditation; मनःप्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः the functions of the mind, the vital airs and the senses; धारयते (man) controls; सा that; धृतिः firmness; सात्त्विकी (is) Sattvic.

The unwavering firmness by which man controls through the Yoga of meditation the functions of the mind, the vital airs and the senses—that firmness, Arjuna, is Sattvic. (33)

The faculty of resolutely maintaining or keeping up any activity, feeling or idea,—sustained by which an activity, feeling or idea does not languish but endures for a long time,—such a faculty is called 'Dhṛti' or firmness. But so long as man continues with the help of this firmness to clutch various objects with different motives, its inconstancy or fickleness does not cease. When, however, man sets before him a fixed goal, the Dhṛti becomes constant. Sattvic Dhṛti has only one object, the realization of God. That is why it is called 'Avyabhichārinī'.

The idea is that the Dhṛti which remains fixed on one and only one object, viz., God-Realization, which never deviates from its purpose, which has no diverse motives and by which man keeps his mind and senses etc. directed towards God for the sake of His realization and ever maintains his control over them, allowing them on no account to waver and get attached to sense-objects,—such a Dhṛti is Sattvic. This type of Dhṛti enables man to attain God speedily; hence he who seeks beatitude should endeavour to make his Dhṛti Sattvic.

The Lord now characterizes Rajasic Dhṛti.

यया तु धर्मकामार्थान् धृत्या धारयतेऽर्जुन ।

प्रसङ्गेन फलाकाङ्क्षी धृतिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥ ३४ ॥

तु but; पार्थ O son of Prthā (Kuntī); अर्जुन O Arjuna; फलाकाङ्क्षी he who seeks a reward for his actions; यया धृत्या by which Dhṛti or firmness; प्रसङ्गेन with extreme fondness; धर्मकामार्थान् Dharma (virtue), Artha (earthly possessions) and Kāma (worldly enjoyments); धारयते clutches; सा that; धृतिः Dhṛti (firmness); राजसी (is) Rajasic.

The Dhṛti, however, by which the man seeking a reward for his actions clutches with extreme fondness virtue, earthly possessions and worldly enjoyments,—that Dhṛti is Rajasic, Arjuna (34)

The idea is that the type of Dhṛti by which a man clings to virtue, wealth and enjoyments alone in the aforesaid manner, paying little heed to the means of attaining liberation, is connected with Rajoguna, inasmuch as attachment and desire are products of no other quality than Rajoguna; hence it is Rajasic in character. And such a Dhṛti binds man through actions; hence a seeker of blessedness should strive to make his Dhṛti Sattvic and not allow it to lapse into Rajoguna.

The Lord now defines Tamasic Dhṛti.

यया स्वप्नं भयं शोकं विषादं मदमेव च ।

न विमुञ्चति दुर्मेधा धृतिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥ ३५ ॥

पार्थ O son of Prthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; दुर्मेधा an evil-minded person; यया by which (firmness); स्वप्नम् sleep; भयम् fear; शोकम् anxiety; विषादम् sorrow; च and; मदम् vanity; एव too; न not; विमुञ्चति shakes off; सा that; धृतिः firmness; तामसी (is) Tamasic.

The firmness by which an evil-minded person refuses to shake off, *i.e.*, clings to, sleep, fear, anxiety, sorrow and vanity as well, that firmness is Tamasic. (35)

The evil-minded man whose intellect is extremely dull and impure and whose mind is engrossed with ideas of harming others and so on is referred to here as 'Durmedhāḥ'.

The word 'Swapna' here includes sleep, drowsiness and all other tendencies which go to wrap the mind and senses in ignorance and make them inactive and dull; 'Bhaya' denotes the feeling of uneasiness and distraction caused in the mind by the apprehension of loss of fortune or other possessions, death, trouble, loss of happiness or any other agreeable object and any other untoward occurrence; 'Śoka' includes worries of various kinds which torment the mind;

and the agony caused to the senses by such worries is called 'Viśāda'; this is only a concrete form of 'Śoka'. And the feeling of intoxication caused by richness in men and money and physical strength etc., and divorced from discernment, prudence and foresight, is called 'Mada'; it is also known by other names such as pride, arrogance and vanity. Instead of trying to eliminate these and other Tamasic propensities such as carelessness etc. from the mind, he who remains filled with them is said to cling to 'Swapna', 'Bhaya' and so on.

This Tamasic Dhṛti is a source of evil in every way; hence a seeker of blessedness should immediately and wholly renounce this form of Dhṛti.

Having thus classified Buddhi and Dhṛti under three heads, viz., Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic, in order of sequence, in order that the Sattvic types of both may be chosen and the other two types of each, viz. Rajasic and Tamasic, may be rejected, the Lord now undertakes to classify joy as well under three heads and begins with the characteristics of Sattvic joy.

सुखं त्विदानीं त्रिविधं शृणु मे भरतर्षभ ।
अभ्यासाद्रमते यत्र दुःखान्तं च निगच्छति ॥ ३६ ॥
यत्तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽमृतोपमम् ।
तत्सुखं सात्त्विकं प्रोक्तमात्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम् ॥ ३७ ॥

भरतर्षभ O best among Bharatas; इदानीम् now; त्रिविधम् of three kinds; सुखम् joy; तु also; मे from Me; शृणु hear; यत्र in which; अभ्यासात् through practice (of adoration, meditation and service to God etc.); रमते (the practisant) finds enjoyment; च and; दुःखान्तम् the end of sorrow; निगच्छति reaches; यत् which (is of this type); तत् that (joy); अग्रे in the beginning; विषम् इव (though) appearing as poison; परिणामे eventually, in the long run; अमृतोपमम् (tastes) like nectar; तत् (therefore) that; आत्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम् born of the placidity of mind brought about by meditation or God; सुखम् joy; सात्त्विकम् (as) Sattvic; प्रोक्तम् has been declared.

Now hear from Me the threefold joy too. That in which the striver finds enjoyment through practice of adoration, meditation and service to God etc., and whereby he reaches the end of sorrow, - such a joy, though appearing as poison in the beginning, tastes like nectar in the end; hence that joy, born as it is of the placidity of mind brought about by meditation on God, has been declared as Sattvic. (36-37)

Just as the Lord classified Jñāna, Karma, Kartā, Buddhi and Dhṛti one after another, even so He now undertakes to classify Sukha under three heads in order that one may choose the Sattvic type and reject the Rajasic and Tamasic ones. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the first half of verse 36.

The relative adverb 'Yatra' refers to the supreme Bliss attained by the Yogi whose mind is perfectly serene (VI. 27). This type of joy is experienced only when a man withdraws his attachment from all enjoyments of this world and the next, taking them as ephemeral, and practises constant meditation on the reality of God (V. 21); it remains a sealed book to the unstriving. This is what is meant by speaking of this joy as "Abhyāsāt ramate yatra".

Again, the man who finds enjoyment in this type of joy is rid once for all of all kinds of suffering,—including that which has its origin in one's own body or mind, that which is attributable to natural causes and that which is caused by other animals, and succeeds in realizing the supreme eternal Spirit, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified and is an embodiment of supreme Joy (V. 21, 24; VI. 28). This is what is meant by the clause "Duḥkhāntam cha nigatachhati".

The indeclinable 'Agre' denotes the time when a man takes to the practice of Viveka (distinguishing the real from the unreal, the eternal from the ephemeral and so on), Vairāgya (dispassion), control of the mind and senses and endurance etc. as a means to the attainment of Sattvic joy on hearing its glory.

It is a matter of common experience that on hearing from his elders the glory of learning a boy tries to pursue his studies, but having no real experience of its glory he finds it most unpleasant and difficult in the beginning to prosecute his studies to the exclusion of play and recreation. Even so the man who strives for the attainment of Sattvic joy finds it extremely taxing and irksome to continue the practice of Viveka, Vairāgya, Śama, Dama, Titikṣā and so on, abstaining from sense-enjoyments. This is what is meant by the Lord when He speaks of Sattvic joy as appearing like poison in the beginning.

As a result of continued practice when the striver begins to experience the joy derived from meditation, it tastes like nectar to him; at that time all worldly enjoyments begin to appear insignificant, negligible and disagreeable to him. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the words 'Parīṇāme amṛtopamam'.

The Sattvic joy referred to above is experienced only when the mind gets purified through constant practice of meditation on God. This is what is meant by the compound adjective 'Ātma-buddhiprasāda-jam'. By calling it Sattvic the Lord means that this type of joy alone is joy *par excellence*, the Rajasic and Tamasic types of joy being no joy at all in the real sense of the term. They are joy in name only, eventually they are the same as sorrow; hence a man seeking his redemption should constantly find enjoyment in Sattvic joy alone, and not allow himself to be caught into the trap of Rajasic and Tamasic joys.

The Lord now defines Rajasic joy.

विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद्यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम् ।

परिणामे विषमिव तत्सुखं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥ ३८ ॥

यत् सुखम् the delight which; विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगात् (proceeds) from the contact of the senses with their objects; तत् that; अग्रे at first, at the time of enjoyment; अमृतोपमम् (even though appearing) like nectar; परिणामे in the end; विषम् इव (is) like poison; तत् that (joy); राजसम् (as) Rajasic; स्मृतम् has been spoken of.

The delight which follows from the contact of the senses with their objects is eventually poison-like, though appearing at first as nectar; hence it has been spoken of as Rajasic. (38)

The indeclinable 'Agre' in this verse refers to the time when a man begins to enjoy some object with his senses and mind for the sake of attaining Rajasic joy. A man experiences such delight only so long as he enjoys some object with his senses and mind; this is what is meant by the compound word 'Viṣayendriyasamyogāt'. And due to his attachment for the same the joy appears exceedingly agreeable to him; in the face of such a joy he cares a straw for any unseen joy. This is what is meant by the words 'Agre amṛtopamam'.

Like poison, enjoyment of this Rajasic delight is fraught with bitter consequences. This type of joy is joy only in appearance, it is no joy in the real sense of the term. The idea is that as man fondly enjoys worldly pleasures with his senses and mind, regarding them as joy itself, impressions of those enjoyments are left on the mind, due to which he seeks once more to obtain those very enjoyments; and with that end in view he impulsively perpetrates sins of various kinds through attachment. And in order to reap the evil consequences of such sinful acts he has to be reborn in sub-human species like insects, moths, beasts and birds etc., and to undergo terrible suffering in hells abounding in tortures.

With the growth of attachment for

sense-objects, failure to obtain them again fills a man with grief and the absence of those objects too makes him extremely miserable. Seeing others more happy and prosperous than himself he is filled with jealousy; and the loss of strength, vitality, energy, intelligence and valour as well as the feeling of exhaustion following in the wake of enjoyment are very painful. Similarly there are many other bitter consequences too. Therefore, even though this momentary pleasure derived from the contact of senses with their objects is really speaking disagreeable in every way, nevertheless, a sensual man ignorantly and fondly enjoys pleasures regardless of consequences and, taking them to be joy itself, undergoes terrible suffering of various kinds and in numerous ways as a result thereof. His case is similar to that of an ailing man who takes an unwholesome diet due to attachment and love of flavour regardless of consequences, and suffers in consequence due to aggravation of his malady or meets with death. Or his case may be compared to that of a moth, which on account of its attachment to colour, the object of sight, finds pleasure in deliberately dashing against the flame of a lamp taking it to be an embodiment of joy, but suffers in the end by getting singed and dies.

This momentary pleasure appears as agreeable to us only because of our attachment to sense-objects, and attachment is a form of Rajogūṇa; hence it is Rajasic and binds man through attachment. Therefore, a seeker of beatitude should not allow himself to be enticed into the trap of this type of delight.

The Lord now characterizes Tamasic delight.

यदग्रे चानुबन्धे च सुखं मोहनमात्मनः ।

निद्रालस्यप्रमादोत्थं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ ३९ ॥

यत् सुखम् the delight which; अग्रे during enjoyment; च and; अनुबन्धे in the end; च as well; आत्मनः मोहनम् stupefies the self; तत् that; निद्रालस्यप्रमादोत्थम् (joy) derived from sleep, indolence and obstinate error; तामसम् Tamasic; उदाहृतम् has been called.

That which stupefies the self during its enjoyment as well as in the end,—derived from sleep, indolence and obstinate error, such delight has been called Tamasic. (39)

During sleep the function of our mind and senses is suspended; this relieves us of the suffering caused by exhaustion and gives rest to these organs. The joy that we experience thereby is referred to here as 'Nidrottha Sukha' or joy derived from sleep. This joy lasts only so long as we are asleep, it is anything but constant; hence it is momentary or ephemeral. Besides this, the mind, intellect and senses lose their perspicacity, they are no longer capable of perceiving anything. In this way this joy is said to stupefy the self, viz. the mind and senses as well as the Spirit, which identifies itself with them. And due to attachment for this joy man has to be reborn in the end in the species of stupid and inanimate creatures such as trees, mountains etc.; hence this joy is said to stupefy the Self even in the end.

Similarly, the sense of comfort that one feels on giving up exertion of the mind, senses and body while one remains lying, abstaining from all forms of activity, is referred to as 'Ālasyottha Sukha' or joy derived from indolence. Like the joy derived from sleep, this joy also robs the mind and senses of their

perspicacity and stupefies them during its enjoyment; and inasmuch as it leads to rebirth in the species of stupid creatures as a result of infatuation and attachment, it stupefies the self even in the end.

Idle pursuits undertaken through attachment for the sake of diversion and foolish and deliberate neglect of duty—this is called 'Pramāda' or obstinate error. And the delight that one ignorantly finds in taking to idle pursuits because of the amusement they afford, and in neglecting one's duty because one is spared exertion thereby, is 'Pramādottha Sukha' or joy derived from obstinate error. During the time a man is engaged in some frivolous pursuit by way of recreation he fails to perceive what he should do and what he should not; his faculty of judgment gets obscured through ignorance. And it is only when a man's judgment gets clouded that he neglects his duty. In this way this joy derived from obstinate error stupefies the self during its enjoyment. And in order to reap the consequences of lying, duplicity, violence and other sinful acts that one is liable to commit due to ignorance and

attachment in course of such idle pursuits, as well as of the neglect of duty involved therein, one is reborn in vile species like swine and dogs and cast into hells. In this way it stupefies the soul even in the end.

Sleep, error and sloth—all these three are products of Tamoguna (XIV. 17);

hence the joy that is derived from these is Tamasic in character. And it is by depicting these as agreeable that Tamoguna binds the human soul (XIV. 8); hence a man seeking beatitude should not allow himself to be caught in the trap of this Tamasic joy, which is momentary, stupefying and only apparent.

Having thus classified all the principal categories mentioned in verse 18 above under three heads, viz., Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic, the Lord now winds up this topic by declaring all the objects of this creation as characterized by the three Guṇas or modes of Prakṛti.

न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा दिवि देवेषु वा पुनः ।

सत्त्वं प्रकृतिजैर्मुक्तं यदेभिः स्यात्त्रिभिर्गुणैः ॥ ४० ॥

पृथिव्याम् on earth; वा or; दिवि in heaven; वा or; देवेषु among the gods or celestials; पुनः or anywhere else; तत् that; सत्त्वं being; न not; अस्ति is (there); यत् which; प्रकृतिजैः born of Prakṛti or Nature; एभिः त्रिभिः गुणैः from these three Guṇas; मुक्तम् free; स्यात् may be.

There is no being on earth or in the middle region or even among the gods or anywhere else, which is free from these three Guṇas born of Prakṛti. (40)

The word 'Pṛthivyām' in this verse denotes the terrestrial plane, all the subterranean regions such as Pātāla etc. and all animate as well as inanimate beings and objects comprised in those regions. 'Divi' stands for the sky or the middle region existing immediately beyond the earth and all living beings and objects comprised therein. And the word 'Deveṣu' signifies all gods as well as the different celestial worlds and all objects existing in those worlds. The indeclinable 'Punaḥ' is intended to cover all other objects or living beings existing in any other part of the universe.

Prakṛti, viz., Sattva, Rajas and Tamas; and it is attachment for these Guṇas born of Prakṛti that is responsible for the birth of living beings in various species (XIII. 21). Therefore, of the living beings and other objects existing on the terrestrial plane, in the middle region and in the celestial and all other worlds, there is no object or living being free from or beyond these three Guṇas. For while all material creation is undeniably of the same essence as the Guṇas, being a product of the same, all living beings are connected with those Guṇas as well as with the objects which are their products; hence they too are characterized by the three Guṇas.

The word 'Sattvam' here denotes existence in general, i. e., the totality of living beings and other objects. What the Lord seeks to drive at in this verse is that all objects in the universe are products of the three Guṇas born of

Here it may be urged that those who have risen above the three Guṇas are also comprised in God's creation; how, then, can it be said that no living being in this universe is free from the Guṇas? In this connection

it may be submitted that even though in the eyes of the world the Guṇātīta (he who has risen above the three Guṇas) forms part of the universe, really speaking, the creation does not exist in his eyes nor does he abide in God's creation or in the body for the matter of that; it is in God alone that he lives in eternal union with Him, hence he is identical in essence with God. That is why he cannot be counted among ordinary creatures. Of

course, if he is called a living being from the point of view of his body, which is a conglomeration of mind, intellect and senses etc. and is perceptible to all, we see no objection to it; for that conglomeration is nothing but a product of the Guṇas, hence how can it be declared as existing beyond the Guṇas ? Thus it can be safely asserted that no living being or object in this creation is free from the three Guṇas.

In the opening verse of this chapter Arjuna sought enlightenment on the truth about Sannyāsa and Tyāga separately; hence with a view to expounding the truth of both, the Lord first of all cited the opinion of various thinkers on the subject and then gave His own definitions of Tyāga (Renunciation) and a Tyāgī (man of renunciation) in verses 4 to 12 above. Thereafter, discussing the true conception of Sannyāsa (Sāṅkhyayoga) in verses 13 to 17. He classified in verses 18 to 40 principal categories such as Jñāna, Karma and Kartā etc. according to the predominance of the three Guṇas in order that one may adopt Sattvagūṇa, which is helpful to the practice of Sannyāsa, and reject Rajas and Tamas, which are prejudicial to the same, and wound up the topic by declaring in the end the entire creation as characterized by the three Guṇas.

While discussing the nature of Tyāga in the introductory verses of this chapter, the Lord stated that it was not advisable to shirk one's prescribed duty (XVIII. 7); on the other hand, He declared real Tyāga to consist in continuing to perform one's allotted duties while renouncing attachment and the desire for fruit (XVIII. 9). But in that context He did not mention what duty is prescribed for whom. Therefore, in order to discuss in brief the true nature of prescribed duties, the part played by Bhakti or Devotion in Karmayoga discussed under the name of Tyāga and to show that its practice ultimately leads to the attainment of highest perfection, the Lord resumes discussion of the topic of Karmayoga under the name of Tyāga and undertakes to point out the natural duties allotted to the Brahman, the Kṣatriya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra.

ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशां शूद्राणां च परंतप ।

कर्माणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावप्रभवैर्गुणैः ॥ ४१ ॥

परंतप O scourge of foes, Arjuna; ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशाम् of the Brahman (the priestly class), the Kṣatriya (the warrior class) and the Vaiśya (the trading class); च and; शूद्राणाम् of the Śūdras (the labouring class); कर्माणि the duties or functions; स्वभावप्रभवैः गुणैः according to the inborn qualities; प्रविभक्तानि have been divided.

The duties of the Brahmans, the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas, as well as of the Śūdras, have been divided according to their inborn qualities, Arjuna. (41)

The Brahman, the Kṣatriya and the Vaiśya—all these three belong to the category of Dwijas or the twice-born. All the three are entitled to wear the sacred thread (Yajñopavita) and to study the Vedas and perform Vedic rites such as sacrifices and so on. That is why the three words 'Brāhmaṇa', 'Kṣatriya' and 'Viś' have been compounded. The Śūdras are not included among the Dwijas and are not competent to wear the sacred thread, study the Vedas or perform sacrifices and other Vedic rites. It is in order to bring out this distinction that the word 'Śūdrāṇām' has been separately used.

The sum-total of tendencies or predispositions formed as a result of actions performed by a particular Jiva through a number of lives is known by the name of Swabhāva or nature. It is in accordance with this nature that the three Guṇas,—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—manifest themselves in the mind of living beings. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the use of the compound adjective 'Swabhāvaprabhavaiḥ' before

'Guṇaiḥ'. Again, it is in accordance with the manifestation of these Guṇas that men are born in different castes such as the Brahmans and so on. Therefore, it is on the basis of these Guṇas that the duties of the four Varnas or grades of society have been apportioned by the Śāstras. The man who possesses an abundance of unmixed Sattva is born as a Brahman; hence control of the mind and senses etc. have been declared to be his natural duties or functions. He whose nature is marked by an abundance of Rajas mixed with Sattva is born as a Kṣatriya; hence exhibition of valour and intrepidity have been declared as his natural duties. He whose nature possesses an abundance of Rajas blended with Tamas is born as a Vaiśya; hence agriculture and rearing of cows etc. have been declared to be his natural avocation. And he whose nature is dominated by Tamas mixed with Rajas is born as a Śūdra; hence service of the other three classes has been declared his natural duty. This very idea has been explained at length in the commentary on verse 13 of Chapter IV.

According to the introduction given in the preceding verse the Lord first mentions the natural duties of a Brahman.

शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिरार्जवमेव च ।

ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्तिक्यं ब्रह्मकर्म स्वभावजम् ॥ ४२ ॥

शमः subjugation of the mind; दमः subjugation of the senses; तपः enduring hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations; शौचम् external and internal purity; क्षान्तिः forgiving the faults of others; आर्जवम् straightness of mind, senses and behaviour; आस्तिक्यम् belief in the Vedas and other scriptures, God and life after death etc.; ज्ञानम् (acquiring and imparting) knowledge (of the Vedas and other scriptures); च and; विज्ञानम् realizing of the truth relating to God; एव all these (constitute); स्वभावजम् ब्रह्मकर्म the natural duties of a Brahman.

Subjugation of the mind and senses, enduring hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations, external and internal purity, forgiving the faults of others, straightness of mind, senses and behaviour, belief in

the Vedas and other scriptures, God and life after death etc., study and teaching of the Vedas and other scriptures and realization of the truth relating to God—all these constitute the natural duty of a Brahman. (42)

Śama consists in subjugating and composing the mind—freeing it from all distractions and abandoning all thought of worldly objects.

Subduing all the senses, withdrawing them from external objects and employing them in practices for God-Realization is called 'Dama'.

Enduring hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations—that is to say, observing the major vows of non-violence etc., forgoing luxuries and leading a simple life, observing a fast and other vows on every Ekādaśī (the eleventh day of every dark and bright fortnight) and other sacred days and living in the woods—all these are included in 'Tapas'.

Verse 3 of Chapter XVI speaks of

external purity under the name of 'Śauca', while the opening verse of the same chapter mentions purity of mind under the name of 'Sattvasuddhi'; the word 'Śaucham' in the present verse covers both these forms of purity. The word 'Śaucham' occurring in verse 7 of Chapter XIII also implies both these kinds of purity. That is to say, 'Śaucham' consists in maintaining the purity of one's mind, senses and body as well as of their activities, and not allowing impurity of any kind to creep into them.

The idea of forbearance has been explained at length in the commentary on verse 4 of Chapter X under the name of 'Kṣamā' and in that on verse 7 of Chapter XIII under the name of 'Kṣānti'.*

* Once upon a time King Viśvāmitra, son of Gādhi, accidentally arrived at the hermitage of the great sage Vasiṣṭha. He was followed by a huge army. Through the grace of Nandini, a celestial cow yielding all desires, Vasiṣṭha treated the monarch along with his army to dishes of various kinds and gave him a present of jewels, wearing apparel and ornaments. The wonderful cow caught the imagination of Viśvāmitra, who asked Vasiṣṭha for the same. Vasiṣṭha refused to part with the cow on the plea that she had been kept by him for the service of gods, the manes and newcomers, as well as for sacrificial purposes. Viśvāmitra was proud of his strength in men and arms, he wanted to take her away by force. Nandini approached Vasiṣṭha and piteously told him that the hard-hearted men of the royal army mercilessly belaboured her with whips and cudgels and wondered how he had shut his eyes to their tyranny. Vasiṣṭha gave her the following reply:—

क्षत्रियाणां बलं तेजो ब्राह्मणानां क्षमा बलम् ।
क्षमां मां भजते यस्माद्भूम्यतां यदि रोचते ॥

(Mahābhārata, Ādi-parva, 175, 28)

"The strength of Kṣatriyas lies in their indomitable courage, while the strength of the Brahmins lies in their forbearance. I cannot give up forbearance; you can leave me if you please."

Nandini assured the sage that none could take her by force if he did not forsake her. And Vasiṣṭha in his turn gave her to understand that he had no intention to abandon her and that she was at liberty to stay if she could.

Thereupon Nandini assumed a terrible aspect, her tail began to rain fire; thereafter, a host of barbarous tribes sprang up from her tail. The army of Viśvāmitra was utterly confounded. Nandini's host did not kill a single member of the royal army, they all fled in terror. Viśvāmitra saw none who could protect him. Then he was filled with great wonder and said:—

धिग्बलं क्षत्रियबलं ब्रह्मतेजोबलं बलम् ।

(Mahābhārata, Ādi-parva, 175, 44)

Harbouring no perversity or crookedness in the mind, expressing through the senses what one feels in the mind and allowing no contortion in the body—this is what is meant by straightness of the mind, senses and body.

Believing in the authority and infallibility of the Vedas and other scriptures and in the existence of God and life after death, putting trust in the words of holy men and reposing unwavering faith in piety and virtue—all this is covered by 'Āstikyam'.

'Jñānam' consists in devoutly studying and teaching the Vedas and other scriptures and fully grasping their teachings.

And 'Vijñānam' means directly perceiving the reality of God through practices taught in the Vedas and other scriptures and recommended by holy men.

A Brahman is dominated by unmixed Sattva; therefore, he has a natural bias for the duties enumerated above; his temperament is suited to the performance

of these duties, hence he experiences no difficulty in performing them. This is what is meant by declaring them as the natural duties of a Brahman. They, however, include some common duties as well. This should be taken to mean that although they are not the natural duties of Kṣatriyas and others, yet they can be performed by them with some effort inasmuch as God-Realization is open to all and sundry.

The duties mentioned above are purely Sattvic in character, hence they are particularly congenial to the temperament of a Brahman; that is why the Lord has thought fit to include these alone in the duties of a Brahman, and has not gone into further detail. They should, therefore, be supplemented by other duties that have been mentioned in *Manusmṛiti* (the Code of Manu) and other works. Study and teaching of the Vedas, performing sacrifices and officiating at them, and accepting as well as bestowing gifts—these are the six duties of a Brahman mentioned in *Manusmṛiti*.*

Having thus mentioned the duties of a Brahman, the Lord now points out the duties of a Kṣatriya.

"Fie upon the might of the Kṣatriyas; the strength in the shape of spiritual glow of the Brahmins is real strength."

Thereafter King Kalmāṣapāda, who had assumed the form of a demon under the force of an imprecation, killed all the sons of Vasiṣṭha at the instigation of Viśvāmitra; yet Vasiṣṭha did not try to retaliate.

In the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmiki we have it that Viśvāmitra then renounced his sovereignty and undertook austere penance, and as a result of his terrible penance extending over thousands of years he gradually earned the titles of Rājaraṣi (a royal sage) and Maharaṣi (a great sage) and finally became known as a Brahmarṣi (a sage among the Brahmins). At the instance of gods the forbearing Maharaṣi Vasiṣṭha acknowledged him a Brahmarṣi. In the end—

विश्वामित्रोऽपि धर्मात्मा लब्ध्वा ब्राह्मण्यमुत्तमम् ।

पूजयामास ब्रह्मर्षिं वसिष्ठं जपतां वरम् ॥

(Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa 1. 65. 27)

"Having attained the highest position of a Brahman, the pious sage Viśvāmitra too offered his homage to the Brahman sage Vasiṣṭha, the best of those who mutter sacred formulas."

* अध्यापनमध्ययनं यजनं याजनं तथा ।

दानं प्रतिग्रहं चैव ब्राह्मणानामकल्पयत् ॥

शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्दाक्ष्यं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम् ।

दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥ ४३ ॥

शौर्यम् (exhibition of) valour; तेजः fearlessness; धृतिः firmness; दाक्ष्यम् cleverness; च and; युद्धे अपलायनम् refusing to flee from battle; दानम् bestowing gifts; च and; ईश्वरभावः lordliness; अपि all these (constitute); क्षात्रम् of a Kṣatriya; स्वभावजम् कर्म the natural duty.

Exhibition of valour, fearlessness, firmness, cleverness and steadiness in battle, bestowing gifts, and lordliness—all these constitute the natural duty of a Kṣatriya. (43)

'Sauryam' consists in fearlessly offering life of the great patriarch Bhīṣma is a righteous opposition to the mightiest foe glowing example of this virtue.* and remaining ever ready to fight in a just cause and putting up a sober and stout fight on the field of battle. The 'Tejas' is that moral stamina by dint of which a man firmly adheres to his

* Bhīṣma, the grand old man of the Kaurava army, remained a strict celibate all his life. He exhibited in himself all the virtues of a Kṣatriya. He received instruction in the use of arms from the avowed enemy of the Kṣatriya race, Lord Paraśurāma. When the latter pressed him hard to marry Princess Ambā, the eldest daughter of the King of Kāśī, he most respectfully declined in order to maintain his vow of celibacy. But when Paraśurāma could not be reconciled in any way and began to indulge in severe threats, he plainly told him:—

न भयान्नामुनुकोशार्थोभोभान्न काम्यया । क्षात्रं धर्ममहं जह्यामिति मे व्रतमाहितम् ॥

यच्चापि कल्पसे राम बहुशः परिवत्सरे । निजिताः क्षत्रिया लोके मयैकेनेति तच्छृणु ॥

न तदा जातवान् भीष्मः क्षत्रियो वापि मद्रिधः । पश्चाज्जातानि तेजांसि तृणेषु ज्वलितं त्वया ॥

व्यपनेष्यामि ते दर्पं युद्धे राम न संशयः ।

(Mahā., Udyoga. 178)

"I cannot abandon the duty of a Kṣatriya either out of fear, compassion, greed of wealth or for any other gain: this is my cherished vow. As for your boast that for many years together you wiped out the Kṣatriyas single-handed more than once (as many as twenty-one times), hear, O Rāma, my reactions about it. The fact is that the heyday of your glory did not witness the birth of Bhīṣma or any other Kṣatriya of his category. You have burnt only straw. Luminaries among the Kṣatriyas appeared only later. Surely, Rāma, I shall curb your pride on the field of battle presently."

Paraśurāma got enraged. A duel ensued between them and raged furiously for full twenty days and three; but Paraśurāma could not get the better of Bhīṣma. At last it was at the intervention of Nārada and the celestial sages and of Bhīṣma's celestial mother, goddess Gangā herself, who bodily appeared on the scene, and on Paraśurāma dropping down his bow, that the conflict ended. Bhīṣma neither turned his back on the battle-field nor laid down his arms first (Mahā., Ud., 185).

Out of the eighteen days that the Mahābhārata war lasted, the great Bhīṣma held the field as the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava forces for full ten days. During the remaining eight days many generalissimos succeeded one after the other.

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa had taken a vow not to take up arms during the Mahābhārata war. They say Bhīṣma took a counter-vow for some reason to the effect that he would compel the Lord to break His vow and take up arms. Although the epic does not describe the episode in the same way, the celebrated Hindi poet Surdas has drawn an exquisite pen-picture of Bhīṣma's vow. Bhīṣma says:—

duty under all circumstances, resisting all pressure exerted to the contrary, and due to which other people hesitate to do anything wrong or that which is not liked by him. It is also known by other names such as majesty and glory etc.

He who does not get unnerved even when faced with the greatest danger, e.g. on being mortally wounded on the battlefield, on the death of his son, grandson or any other near relation, on losing his all or on being confronted with any other

"If I fail to make Śrī Hari take up arms, I should prove to be a shame to mother Gaṅgā and shall no longer call myself a son of Śantanu. I shall break the mighty chariot and shake it along with the flag which bears a monkey (Hanumān) on its crest. Should I fail to do all this, I swear by the Lord Himself, let me not attain the high destiny of a Kṣatriya. I shall march in front of the Pāṇḍava host and shed a river of blood. Without attaining victory I shall not turn my back on the field of battle so long as there is life in me."

Be that as it may, the *Mahābhārata* says, on the third day from the outbreak of the war, when Bhīṣma waged a fierce fight, the Lord got enraged and dropped the reins of the horses, and taking up His discus, which blazed like the sun, leapt down from the chariot revolving it in His hand. Seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa armed with a discus, all those assembled on the field gave a loud yell of fear. Like the fire at the dissolution of the universe the Lord darted with great speed towards Bhīṣma. Seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa advance towards him, discus in hand, the high-souled Bhīṣma did not get the least frightened and, heroically sounding the string of his bow, addressed Him thus: "O God of gods, O Abode of the Universe, O Lord of Lakṣmī (the goddess of prosperity), O Wielder of Discus, You are welcome; I bow to You. O Refuge of all, knock me down from this excellent car by force. Kṛṣṇa, being slain at Your hands, I shall be highly blessed here as well as hereafter. O Lord of the Yadus, You personally rushed to kill me; this has enhanced my glory in all the three worlds."

Arjuna ran and clasped the Lord's feet from behind and somehow persuaded Him to return (*Mahā., Bhīṣma., 59*).

Once again, on the ninth day of the war, the Lord beheld that the grand old man had let loose a hell of destruction on the Pāṇḍava host. Dropping down the rein of the horses, the Lord darted once more towards Bhīṣma, whip in hand. At every stride of the Lord the earth cracked as it were due to the fire of energy of the Lord. The heroes of the Kaurava army lost their nerve and exclaimed: "Bhīṣma is gone!" "Bhīṣma is no more!" Seeing the Lord rush towards him as a lion towards an elephant, Bhīṣma did not lose his balance and, stringing his bow, the grand old man said:—

एक्षेहि पुण्डरीकाक्ष देवदेव नमोऽस्तु ते । मामद्य सात्वतश्रेष्ठ पातयस्व महाहवे ॥

त्वया हि देव संग्रामे हतस्यापि ममानघ । श्रेय एव परं कृष्ण लोके भवति सर्वतः ॥

सम्भावितोऽसि गोविन्द त्रैलोक्येनाद्य संयुगे । प्रहरस्व यथेष्टं वै दासोऽसि तव चानघ ॥

(*Mahā., Bhīṣma., 106. 64-66*)

"O lotus-eyed Lord, O god of gods, my obeisance to You. O best of the Yadus, hail, hail to You; slay me in this great battle. O sinless Lord, O Kṛṣṇa, meeting my death at Your hands today, I shall be blessed in every way in this world. O Protector of cows, honoured in this way by You I have been honoured by all the three worlds. O sinless One, I am Your bond-slave; strike me at Your will."

Arjuna ran and clasped the hands of the Lord; but the latter did not stop and moved along, dragging Arjuna behind Him. At last, when Arjuna reminded him of His vow and took a solemn pledge to kill Bhīṣma, the Lord returned to His post.

Having fought for ten days when Bhīṣma was thinking of dropping his body, the seers and Vasus (a class of gods) present in the sky told Bhīṣma that they approved of his idea. Thereafter, refusing to strike Śikhāṇḍī, Bhīṣma, the lifelong Brahmachāri, succumbed to the shafts of Arjuna and fell down on a bed of arrows. While falling down Bhīṣma saw that the sun was still coursing in a

grave disaster—and remains devoted to his legitimate duty and never shirks it, is said to have what is called 'Dhṛti' or firmness.

in determining and discharging one's duty, in fighting with the enemy and in dealing properly with one's friends, foes and neutrals, is referred to here as 'Dākṣyam'.

The cleverness shown in dispensing justice to two or more contending parties,

He who never turns his back on the field of battle even in the face of the

southerly direction; hence he did not give up the ghost. Goddess Gaṅgā (Bhīṣma's mother) despatched great seers in the form of swans to him. Bhīṣma told them that he would survive till the sun had changed its course and would give up the ghost only at the proper hour. Hardly an inch of space had been left in Bhīṣma's body, which was not penetrated by Arjuna's shafts (*Mahā., Bhīṣma., 119*). His head alone was suspended in the air. The grey-haired warrior asked for a pillow. Duryodhana and others ran with valuable soft cushions. Bhīṣma laughed and said, "My valiant sons, such pillows hardly fit in with the bed of a fallen warrior." At last he asked Arjuna to provide him with a pillow suited to his needs. Arjuna shot three arrows under the head of Bhīṣma in such a way that it was raised and the shafts served him as a pillow. Bhīṣma was much pleased at this and spoke to Arjuna thus:—

एवमेव महाबाहो धर्मेषु परित्यक्ता । स्वतन्त्रं क्षत्रियेणैव शरतत्पगतेन वै ॥

(*Ibid., 120. 49*)

"It is in this way that a Kṣatriya who is strictly devoted to his duty should repose on a bed of arrows while casting off his mortal coil on the field of battle."

The great Bhīṣma was lying wounded on his bed of arrows. At this expert surgeons, proficient in the art of extracting arrows, were summoned. Bhīṣma told them that he had attained the highest destiny of a Kṣatriya; the surgeons were, therefore, no longer of any use to him (*ibid., 120*).

The wounds and cuts in the body of Bhīṣma were causing great pain to him. He asked for cold water. People ran with jars of ice-cold water. Bhīṣma reminded them that he was lying on a bed of arrows and was awaiting the change of course of the sun, and wondered what kind of drink they had brought for him. At last he summoned Arjuna and told him that his throat was getting parched with thirst and asked him to provide him with water as Arjuna was competent to do so. Arjuna mounted the chariot, strung his illustrious bow, Gāṇḍīva, and shot an arrow consecrated with a mystical formula called Parjanyaśtra into the ground to the right of his granduncle, Bhīṣma. Immediately there welled up a jet of nectar-like and fragrant water and fell into Bhīṣma's mouth. Bhīṣma quaffed that drink to his heart's content. (*Ibid., 121*).

At the conclusion of the Mahābhārata war King Yudhiṣṭhira called on Bhīṣma along with Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. All leading sages and seers, who had realized God, were present on the scene. Seeing the Lord, Bhīṣma greeted and extolled Him. Śrī Kṛṣṇa told Bhīṣma that it would take some time before the sun would change its course towards the north; in the meantime He requested Bhīṣma to relieve Yudhiṣṭhira of his grief by imparting to him the knowledge of the sacred lore that he had acquired. Bhīṣma submitted to the Lord that his body was smarting with pain on account of its wounds, that his mind and intellect were fidgety, that he was unable to speak, that he fainted every now and then, that it was by the Lord's grace alone that he had been surviving till then. Moreover, he felt that it would be presumptuous on his part to speak anything in the presence of the Preceptor of the Universe. He was feeling tongue-tied, and therefore begged to be excused. With tears of love gushing from His eyes the Lord spoke in a voice choked with emotion, "Bhīṣma dear, your exhaustion, fits of swoon, the sensation of burning agony, pangs of hunger and torpor—everything shall presently disappear by My grace. Knowledge of every description shall flash on your mind, your intellect shall have a fixed resolve, your mind shall be ever established in the quality of Sattva, your reason shall begin to guide you in the matter of Dharma or any other branch of learning

gravest danger, who offers righteous opposition to the enemy under all circumstances and continues to exert his strength against him and remains fixed to his post risking his own life, serves as an illustration of 'Yuddhe apalāyanam'. Keeping this very ideal before him the youthful hero Abhimanyu courted death while contending with six great generals single-handed, but refused to lay down his arms (*Mahā., Droṇa.,* 49, 22). Even in the medieval history of Rajasthan we come across many such examples in which the valiant Rajput did not turn his back on the enemy even on being vanquished in battle and laid down their life by fighting single-handed against hundreds and thousands.

Liberal bestowing one's possessions on deserving persons according to their needs is what is called 'Dānam' (XVII. 20).

'Īśwarabhāvaḥ' consists in deterring the people from wrong-doing and turning them towards the right path, punishing the evil-doers, enforcing lawful obedience to one's orders and taking care of and looking after the people as one's own progeny in a loving and disinterested spirit keeping in mind the interests of the general public.

The temperament of the Kṣatriyas is dominated by Rajoguṇa mixed with Sattva;

hence they have a natural bias towards these duties, they experience no difficulty in performing them. Of these duties, again, those of a universal nature, such as firmness, charity etc., being open to all, are neither 'Adharma' (prohibited) nor Paradharma (alien) for non-Kṣatriyas; they are, however, not their natural duties. That is why their performance involves exertion on their part. This is what is meant by declaring the above duties as natural to a Kṣatriya.

The *Manusmṛiti* or the Code of Manu briefly mentions the following as the duties for a Kṣatriya. They are: (1) governance of the people, (2) bestowing gifts, (3) performing sacrifices, (4) study of the Vedas and (5) non-attachment to sensuous pleasures. The Lord, however, refers in this context to those duties alone that bear special affinity to the temperament of the Kṣatriyas; hence He has included in this verse only two of the five duties prescribed by Manu, viz., governance of the people and charity under the names of 'Īśwarabhāva' and 'Dāna', which bear special affinity to the Kṣatriya temperament. The other duties of the warrior class have not been dealt with at length in this verse. Hence the duties mentioned in this verse should be taken to include other duties as well that have been prescribed for the Kṣatriyas in other scriptures.

that you may fix your mind upon." He further told Bhīṣma that instead of doing it Himself He was asking him to speak only in order that the fame and glory of His devotee may be enhanced. By the grace of God all the agonies that Bhīṣma felt in his body disappeared then and there, his mind became alert and his intellect was fully awakened. By dint of his lifelong chastity, intuition, wisdom and devotion of God, Bhīṣma, whose knowledge was unfathomable, instructed Yudhiṣṭhira in all the aspects of Dharma with the same youthful vigour as he had evinced on the field of battle for ten days, and brought solace to the latter's heart, which was tormented with grief (*Mahā., Śānti. and Anuśāsana*).

Having lain on his bed of arrows for full fifty days and eight, Bhīṣma resolved to give up his ghost on the day the sun turned towards the north, and spoke to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa as follows: "O Deity, O supreme god of gods, O Lord who is adored by gods as well as demons, O Trivikrama (He who in His cosmic form measured all the three worlds in three strides), O Wielder of the celebrated Conch, Discus and Mace, I offer obeisance to You. O Vāsudeva (all-pervading Lord), You are Hiranyātmā (flaming like fire), the supreme Puruṣa, Savitā (the Creator), Virāṭ (one endowed with a cosmic Body), the embodied soul, atom-shaped, the supreme Spirit and Sanātana (the everlasting one). O lotus-eyed One, O highest Person, pray redeem this soul. O Kṛṣṇa, O Vaikuṇṭha, O

Having thus pointed out the natural duties of the Kṣatriya, the Lord now mentions those of the Vaiśya and the Śūdra.

कृषिगौरक्ष्यवाणिज्यं वैश्यकर्म स्वभावजम् ।

परिचर्यात्मकं कर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावजम् ॥ ४४ ॥

कृषिगौरक्ष्यवाणिज्यम् agriculture, rearing of cows and honest exchange of merchandise; स्वभावजम् वैश्यकर्म (constitute) the natural duty of a Vaiśya or member of the trading class; परिचर्यात्मकम् service (of the other classes); शूद्रस्य अपि of the Śūdra or member of the labouring class also; स्वभावजम् कर्म (is) the natural duty.

Agriculture, rearing of cows and honest exchange of merchandise—these constitute the natural duty of a Vaiśya (a member of the trading class). And service of the other classes is the natural duty even of a Śūdra (a member of the labouring class). (44)

'Kṛṣi' or agriculture consists in sowing seeds of various crops in the soil and lawfully rearing all kinds of foodstuffs such as wheat, barley, grams, paddy, maize, peas, turmeric and coriander, cotton, herbs of various kinds and other pure substances useful for the consumption of gods, human beings and animals etc. like Nanda and other cowherds, grazing them in the woods, serving them with fodder even at one's own place according to their needs, giving them water to drink and protecting them from tigers and other destructive animals, obtaining milk, curds, butter and other dairy products from them and supplying the needs of the public through these products, and lawfully

Keeping cows in one's own household maintaining oneself along with one's

Puruṣottama, now grant me leave to depart. I strongly admonished the dull-headed Duryodhana to realize the truth that:—

यतः कृष्णस्ततो धर्मो यतो धर्मस्ततो जयः ।

"Where there is Kṛṣṇa, Dharma or righteousness is there; and where there is righteousness, victory is assured."

But the fool did not listen to my advice. I recognize You to be the Ancient Person Himself. You are Nārāyaṇa Himself descended on earth.

स मां त्वमनुजानीहि कृष्ण मोक्षये कलेवरम् ।

त्वयाहं समनुज्ञातो गच्छेयं परमां गतिम् ॥

(Mahā., Anu., 167. 45)

"Kṛṣṇa, pray allow me to cast off my body. Leaving this body with Your leave I shall attain the supreme state."

The Lord gave His assent. Thereupon Bhiṣma stopped the inhalation and exhalation of his breath through Yoga and gradually began to push it upwards. As the outgoing breath left a particular part of the body in its upward journey, the shafts stuck into that part were immediately forced out and the wounds got healed. In an instant all the arrows dropped out of Bhiṣma's body, not a single wound was left and his vital breath forced its way upwards through what is known as Brahmarandhra (an aperture in the crown of the head). People saw that a column of light issued from the Brahmarandhra and disappeared in the sky in the twinkling of an eye.

own family out of the sale proceeds of these commodities—all this is covered by 'Gaurakṣyam'. The cow is the chief among cattle and it is also the most serviceable to mankind; hence instead of using the word 'Paśupālanam' the Lord uses 'Gaurakṣyam'. Hence this should be taken to mean that the rearing of other animals serviceable to man, such as the buffalo, the camel, the horse and the elephant etc., is also part of the duty of a Vaiśya; of course, the rearing of the cow is the most important of his duties.

'Vānījyam' consists in buying and selling in a righteous spirit commodities useful for human beings and gods, beasts, birds and all other living beings and supplying the needs of the public by transporting them from one place to another according to local needs. Giving less or taking more in weight, measurement and number etc. while conducting a business transaction, giving an inferior quality for a superior quality or taking a superior quality for an inferior quality by changing the quality of or adulterating a commodity, taking more or giving less than the stipulated amount by way of profit, commission or brokerage, and even so wrongfully appropriating others' dues by resorting to lying, duplicity, stealing and

violence or any other unlawful means in any business whatsoever—all these are foul practices in trade. Honesty in trade consists in avoiding all these foul practices and conducting one's dealings in a truthful manner. It is through such dealings that Tulādhāra attained perfection.*

The temperament of a Vaiśya is dominated by Rajoguṇa mixed with Tamas, hence he comes to have a natural bias towards the duties mentioned in this verse. His disposition is suited to these pursuits; that is why he experiences no difficulty in undertaking them. This is what is meant by the words 'Vaiśyakarma swabhāvajam'.

In addition to these, the *Manusmṛiti* (the Code of Manu) prescribes four more duties for the Vaiśya, viz., performing sacrifices, study of the Vedas, charity, and moneylending.† The Lord, however, mentions here only those duties which bear particular affinity to the temperament of a Vaiśya. Noble pursuits such as the performance of a sacrifice are prescribed for all the twice-born classes (those who are entitled to wear the sacred thread and study the Vedas), hence they have not been included in the natural duties of a Vaiśya; and money-lending has been

* In Kāśī (the modern Banaras) there was a Vaiśya trader, Tulādhāra by name. He was a great ascetic and an embodiment of virtue. He carried on business transactions with honesty and truthfulness.

A Brahman, named Jājali, performed austere penance on the sea-shore. Birds built nests in his matted hair; this made him proud of his austerity. Then a voice from heaven addressed him thus: "Jājali, you are not so pious as Tulādhāra; he does not feel proud like you." Jājali went all the way to Kāśī and saw that Tulādhāra traded in fruits and roots, condiments, clarified butter and so on. He received the Brahman kindly, treated him with respect, bowed to him, and then said, "You have performed rigorous penance on the sea-shore. Birds laid eggs in your matted hair: this elated you and now the voice from heaven has brought you to this place. Pray tell me how can I be of service to you." Jājali was greatly surprised at this wonderful knowledge of Tulādhāra. Asked by Jājali, Tulādhāra gave a beautiful dissertation on Dharma or duty. Hearing the secret of Dharma or virtue from the lips of Tulādhāra, Jājali derived much solace. This beautiful anecdote is given in Chapters 261 to 264 of *Sāntiparva* of the *Mahābhārata*.

† पशूनां रक्षणं दानमिज्याध्ययनमेव च । वणिक्पथं कुसीदं च वैश्यस्य दृष्टिमेव च ॥

recognized as inferior to other duties prescribed for the Vaiśyas, hence that too has not been enumerated among the natural duties of a Vaiśya. Besides these, subjugation of the mind and senses and other practices conducive to liberation, being open to all, are not excluded from the natural duties of a Vaiśya; but since a Vaiśya has no natural tendency towards such practices, they have not been reckoned among his natural duties.

Living by the service of the twice-born classes, viz., the Brahmins, the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas, carrying out their orders, supplying their household with water, helping them in their ablutions, affording them facilities in carrying out their vocational duties, duly helping them in their daily routine, tending their animals, taking care of their belongings, washing their clothes, shaving them and gratifying them with all other kinds of services, or manufacturing articles of common use by manual skill and serving

them with those articles and making one's living by serving them with those articles,—all these are covered by the words 'Paricharyātmakam karma'.

The temperament of a Śūdra is dominated by Tamoguna mixed with Rajas, hence he comes to have a natural leaning towards the above-mentioned acts of service. These duties are suited to his temperament; that is why he experiences no difficulty whatsoever in performing them. This is what is meant by calling them the natural duties of a Śūdra. Again, the use of the particle 'Api' with 'Śūdrasya' is intended to convey that just as other duties are natural for members of other Varnas or castes, even so in the case of the Śūdra service is natural duty. It further shows that service is the only duty prescribed for a Śūdra* and the same is natural with him, so that its performance is very easy for him.†

* एकमेव तु शूद्रस्य प्रभुः कर्म समादिशद् । एतेषामेव वर्णानां शुश्रूषामनस्यया ॥

(Manu., I. 91)

"The Lord has prescribed only one duty for the Śūdra, viz., ungrudging service to the twice-born classes mentioned above."

† Today it is alleged that the division of society into four grades or orders is a selfish creation of members of the higher or twice-born classes, who have been in power. But careful thought would reveal that for the healthy organization of society Varnadharma is most essential and it is no human creation either. The institution of Varṇa is a creation of God. The Lord Himself says:—

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागश्च । (Gītā IV. 13)

"The four orders of society (viz., the Brahman, the Kṣatriya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra) have been created by Me, classifying them according to the mode of Prakṛti predominant in each and apportioning corresponding duties to them."

The great sages and seers of India who were endowed with a prophetic vision and had an intuition of the past and future as well, directly perceived this divine truth and raising the edifice of society on the solid foundation of this truth, gave it an ordered shape and made it peaceful and prosperous, morally sound, active, unselfish, beneficent and secure. For the efficient organization of the human society the need of a fourfold division has been felt at all times and in all climes and the same has existed and does exist in all parts of the world. But the systematized form in which this division existed in this land of sages and seers did not exist anywhere else.

For establishing and maintaining the rule of Dharma or righteousness in society and in order that the society may continue to lead a happy life, and for diligently removing any clog that may present itself in the smooth working of the society, for ending the vicious circle

Having thus enumerated the natural duties of the four Varnas, the Lord now tells us, in the following two verses, the mode of their performance which would easily enable the performer to attain the highest perfection. The Lord's motive in doing so is to reveal the true nature of 'Karmayoga coupled with Devotion' and its reward.

of Karma, for resolving tangles and for giving an authoritative decision when the society is faced with a conflict of duties, what is needed is a clear and unfogged brain. Even so muscular strength or prowess is essential for protecting Dharma as well as the society that has taken its stand on Dharma. Wealth and food are essential for properly nourishing the brain and the muscles. And for the proper discharge of these functions physical exertion or labour is equally essential.

That is why the Brahman represents the brain of the social organism, the Kṣatriya is its arm, the Vaiśya its thigh and the Śūdra represents its feet. They are the four essential limbs of the same social organism and depend for their protection and life on mutual help and co-operation. Contempt or contumely being altogether out of the question, one cannot afford to entertain the least disregard for another. Nor is there any idea of superiority or inferiority between them. All of them are superior in their own position and sphere of activity. The Brahman is superior by virtue of his knowledge and wisdom, the Kṣatriya by virtue of his valour, the Vaiśya by virtue of his wealth or material resources, and the Śūdra by virtue of his numerical strength or capacity for physical exertion. And all the four have their full utility. They have sprung from the body of one and the same God,—the Brahman from His mouth, the Kṣatriya from His arms, the Vaiśya from His thighs and the Śūdra from His feet—

ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीद् बाहू राजन्यः कृतः । उरू तदस्य यद्वैश्यः पदभ्यां शूद्रो अजायत ।

(*Rgveda-Saṃhitā* X. 90. 12)

But the respective strength of these orders or classes is neither conducive to the attainment of their own selfish ends nor aims at self-exaltation by relegating others to a subordinate position. Duties have been divided between them as between the essential limbs of the social organism according to their respective capacity or aptitude. And all this has been done in order that one may discharge one's own duty and enable others to do the same ! Since duties have been properly apportioned without any idea of superiority or inferiority, balance of power is maintained between the four orders. None can disregard another or encroach upon the legitimate rights of another. Built as it is on the solid foundation of division of duties on the basis of qualifications this institution of Varna is so well-organized that balance of power is automatically maintained. By clearly and separately mentioning the duties of each order God Himself as well as the seers who have laid down rules for the conduct of society have afforded all enhanced facilities for discharging their respective duties unhampered and the due discharge of one's own duty can never disturb the balance of power.

Even though the aforesaid four divisions of society naturally exist in Europe and other countries as well, there is no balance of power between them inasmuch as the divisions are not governed by definite principles. That is why the intellect now prevails over military strength, while at other times the masses or the proletariat gets the better of the capitalist. In the Indian division of society this does not happen inasmuch as it prescribes separate duties for each group or division.

In the caste system adopted by the R̥ṣis the Brahman occupies the highest rank; he is the law-giver of the society; it is his precepts that are respected by all. He is the teacher and guide of all; but he does not accumulate riches nor wields the rod of punishment and has no relish for luxuries and enjoyments either. Self-interest has no place in his life as it were. Spurning wealth and power and high position he lives on fruits and roots and resides with his family in a forest far from the din and bustle of town life. He remains engaged day and night in the performance of penance, the practice of virtue and the acquisition of knowledge or wisdom. By dint of his remarkable power of religious

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।

स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥ ४५ ॥

स्वे स्वे कर्मणि to his own natural duty; अभिरतः keenly devoted; नरः man; संसिद्धिम् the highest perfection (in the shape of God-Realization); लभते attains; स्वकर्मनिरतः (a man) engaged in his natural duty; यथा whereby; सिद्धिम् (the highest) perfection; विन्दति attains; तत् that (mode of performance); शृणु hear.

austerities coupled with control of mind and the senses, endurance, forbearance etc. he acquires the eye of wisdom, which is so difficult to attain, and perceiving the truth in the transcendental light of that wisdom propagates that truth in the society in a selfless spirit through pious and morally upright men. He seeks no return for his services. He leads a most simple life, depending on whatever the society voluntarily bestows on him or on whatever he gets by way of alms. Such is the pious ideal of his life.

The Kṣatriya rules over all. He punishes the offender and rewards men of good conduct. Wielding the rod of punishment he does not allow the wicked to rear their head and protects Dharma and society from evil-doers, burglars, dacoits and enemies. A Kṣatriya metes out punishment, but does not frame the laws himself. He follows the laws made by the Brahmins. It is in accordance with those laws that he levies taxes on the people and, again, it is in accordance with those very laws that he spends the revenue so collected in a systematic manner in the interests of the people. The laws are framed by the Brahman and the stock of wealth lies in the hands of the Vaiśya. The role of the Kṣatriya is that of a constitutional manager and guardian only.

The sources of wealth, viz., trade, cattle and food—all these remain in the keeping of the Vaiśya. He produces and multiplies wealth, but not for himself. Protected by the knowledge of the Brahman and the physical strength of the Kṣatriya he spends the wealth in the interests of all the four castes in accordance with the laws referred to above. He has no share in the administration of the state nor does he need it. For the Brahman and the Kṣatriya never meddle with his trade, they never take his wealth with a selfish motive; on the other hand, they protect it and with the help of their wisdom and prowess manage things in such an organized way that he is able to carry on his business efficiently and unhampered. Thus he has no discontent in his heart. And he gladly accepts from the very start the leadership of the Brahman and the Kṣatriya and also deems it necessary to do so; for therein lie his own interests. He willingly pays the tax to the king, renders services to the Brahman and duly provides food and clothing etc. to the Śūdra with honour, fully satisfying his needs.

Now comes the Śūdra; he is naturally superior in number. In the Śūdra physical strength predominates, but intellectual capacity is a bit deficient in him. That is why physical exertion alone has been assigned to him. And for the well-being of the community physical strength is most essential too. But his physical strength is in no way less valuable than any other kind of strength. It is on the numerical strength of the Śūdra that the other three Varṇas take their stand. He is the basis or foundation. It is on the strength of the feet that the body moves. That is why the other three Varṇas look upon the Śūdra as their beloved limb. In return for his labour the Vaiśya gives him ample money, the Kṣatriya protects his wealth and family and the Brahman shows him the path of virtue, the way to God-Realization. No other Varṇa robs him of his livelihood for the realization of its own ends nor do the other Varṇas selfishly underpay him, nor do they ill-treat him taking him to be inferior or lower in rank. They all believe that every Varṇa gets its own due, that none puts another under any obligation. Yet all help one another and all advance his interests along with theirs and consider advancement as their own and his degradation as their own downfall. Under such circumstances

Keenly devoted to his own natural duty, man attains the highest perfection in the shape of God-Realization. Hear the mode of performance whereby the man engaged in his inborn duty reaches that highest consummation. (45)

By using the pronoun 'Swe' twice in this verse the Lord intends to convey that a man reaches the supreme state by performing whatever duty is natural to him. That is to say, the same reward which is obtained by a Brahman through practices such as the subjugation of his mind and senses and so on, by a Kṣatriya through exhibition of valour, governance of the people, bestowing gifts and other such duties, and by a Vaiśya through agriculture and other such pursuits is gained by a Śūdra through acts of service. Therefore, whatever duty is natural to a man is conducive to the highest good for him. For attaining

the Śūdra, who is superior in number, remains contented; none of the four orders is handicapped by another and none of them is subjected to ignominy at the hands of another.

Like four brothers forming a joint family, the four Varṇas remain engaged in discharging their respective and essential duties, ungrudgingly divided according to the capacity of each, for the joint advancement of their family. They add to the strength of the community by advancing the interests of one another,—the Brahman by establishing the rule of virtue, the Kṣatriya by exerting his valour, the Vaiśya by using his material resources and the Śūdra by employing the strength of physical exertion or labour. Neither do they all seek to undertake the same work or occupation nor do they entertain any feeling of superiority or inferiority in performing separate duties. That is how balance of power is maintained between them and the cause of virtue is strengthened and promoted more and more. Such is the grand idea underlying the institution of Varṇa or the caste system.

In this way division of society into so many Varṇas or castes is based on the diversity of Guṇas or qualities and Karma or duties. This however, does not mean that the Varṇa of a man is changed by his taking to an arbitrary occupation. Varṇa has its root in birth and occupation is the principal factor in preserving its identity or individual character. In this way birth and occupation both are essential in determining one's Varṇa. Those who determine Varṇa by occupation alone do not really believe in Varṇa. If Varṇa is determined by occupation alone, there is no knowing how many times a man will have to change his Varṇa in the course of a single day. Society will no longer be governed by any order or law. There will be complete chaos. But no such thing exists in the Indian Caste System or Varṇadharmā as it is called. Had Varṇa been determined by occupation alone, the Lord would not have taught in the Gītā the duties of a Kṣatriya to Arjuna, who had got ready to take up the duties of a Brahman at the commencement of the battle. It is only in accordance with one's virtuous or sinful acts performed in previous lives that one is born in different Varṇas or castes. He who is born in a particular Varṇa or caste should perform the duties prescribed for that Varṇa alone; for that is his own Dharma or duty. And death in the performance of one's duty has been proclaimed by the Lord as conducive to blessedness—'स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः'. At the same time 'Paradharmā', the duty of another, has been declared as 'fraught with danger'. This is quite true; for the balance of power in society is maintained only when all perform their respective duties and then only is the Dharma of a society maintained and promoted. The abandonment of one's duty and the adoption of another's duty are harmful both for the individual and the community. It is a matter for regret that due to various causes disorganization has set in the caste system of the Aryan race. No caste or Varṇa is devoted to its own duty. There is a general tendency to act according to one's own will and the evil consequences of this tendency are becoming evident.

blessedness a particular Varna need not adopt the duties or vocation of another.

The word 'Samsiddhim' in this verse does not stand for accomplishment in the shape of purity of heart or the attainment of heaven or the acquisition of supernatural powers such as that of assuming an atomic form; it denotes that highest consummation which is variously termed as God-Realization, attainment of the supreme goal, of the eternal state, of the supreme state or of Brahma who is all peace. Besides this, the natural duties of a Brahman include the study and teaching of the Vedas and God-Realization; hence it is merely preposterous to believe that these duties can lead to anything else than the supreme state.

The word 'Narah' denotes every human being belonging to the four orders of society; hence the latter half of the

verse is intended to convey that every human being is qualified to attain liberation. It further shows that for the realization of God one need not actually give up one's duties, that a man can attain God by merely continuing to perform without interruption duties appropriate to his Varna or grade in society and Āśrama or stage in life with the object of God-Realization (XVIII. 56).

In the first half of this verse the Lord proclaimed that engaged in one's own duties man attains the highest perfection. Here it may be urged that actions, as a matter of fact, bind a man; how, then, can a man who is keenly devoted to them attain the highest consummation? The Lord answers this possible query in the latter half. That is to say, He undertakes to point out unequivocally, in the next verse, the way to attain the supreme state even while engaged in those duties.

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥ ४६ ॥

यतः from whom; भूतानाम् of (all) living beings; प्रवृत्तिः the emanation (has taken place); येन (and) by whom; इदम् this; सर्वम् entire (universe); ततम् (is) pervaded; तम् Him (God); स्वकर्मणा through his own (natural) duties; अभ्यर्च्य worshipping; मानवः man; सिद्धिम् (the highest) perfection; विन्दति attains.

Man attains the highest perfection by worshipping through his own natural duties Him from whom the tide of creation has streamed forth and by whom all this universe is pervaded. (46)

In order to show how to worship God through the performance of one's duties the Lord first of all draws the attention of Arjuna, in the first half of this verse, to His all-pervading aspect along with His virtues, glory and power. The idea is that while performing each and every duty a man should bear in mind that it is from God that the whole of this universe including all

animate and inanimate beings has emanated, and that it is He who pervades it, or in other words, it is God alone who has revealed Himself in the form of this universe through His Yogamāyā or deluding potency. Hence this world is identical with Him. How He pervades the whole of this universe, has been made clear in the commentary on verse 4 of Chapter IX.

God is the creator, preserver and destroyer of this universe; He is all-powerful, all-supporting, the director of all, the universal soul, the inner controller of all and all-pervading. The whole of this universe is His creation and it is He who has revealed Himself through His own Yogamāyā in the form of the universe; hence the whole of this universe is His. The body, senses, mind and intellect of the worshipper, as well as whatever duties appropriate to his Varna or grade in society, such as sacrifice, charity and so on, are being done by him, also belong to Him, and the worshipper himself is His. And being the Self of all gods and other living beings, it is He who is the enjoyer of all acts (V. 29). Realizing this with supreme faith and reverence and wholly giving up the feeling of mineness, attachment and the desire for fruit, he who serves the whole universe through the performance of His natural duties in accordance with the commandment of God and for the sake of His pleasure only, or in other words, he who performs his

duties in a selfless spirit in the above manner with a view to gratifying all living beings, is said to worship God through the performance of his natural duties.

Any man, to whatever Varna or Āsrama he belongs, can attain God or the supreme Spirit in the form of the highest perfection by worshipping Him through his actions; God-Realization is equally open to all. A Kṣatriya who worships God through exhibition of valour and other duties reaches the same state which is attained by a Brahman worshipping Him through his religious practices, such as the control of mind and senses etc., by dedicating those practices to Him. Even so a Śūdra who worships God through his acts of service reaches the same supreme goal as is reached by the Vaiśya worshipping Him through agriculture and other appropriate pursuits. Hence that is a most easy way to get rid of the shackles of Karma and realize God. Therefore, a man should practise worship of God by performing his duties in the aforesaid spirit. This is what is meant by the latter half of this verse.

In the preceding verse it was stated that a man attains the highest perfection by worshipping God through the performance of his natural duties. This raises the question: If a Kṣatriya abstains from his stern duties such as fighting etc. and strives to attain God by earning his livelihood through a peaceful avocation such as teaching etc., or even so if a Vaiśya or a Śūdra gives up his own duties regarding them as inferior to those of the higher castes and seeks to realize God by following the vocation of a higher caste, will he be justified in doing so or not? Anticipating this query the Lord deprecates the abandonment of one's own duty declaring it as superior to another's.

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।

स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥ ४७ ॥

स्वनुष्ठितात् परधर्मात् than the duty of another well-performed; विगुणः (even) devoid of merit; स्वधर्मः one's own duty; श्रेयान् (is) better; स्वभावनियतम् कर्म the duty ordained by his own nature; कुर्वन् performing; किल्बिषम् sin; न not; आप्नोति (man) incurs.

Better is one's own duty, though devoid of merit, than the duty of

another well-performed; for performing the duty ordained by his own nature man does not incur sin. (47)

A 'well-performed' duty is that which is accomplished with due attention to all its details. The Lord, however, uses the qualification 'Vigraha' with 'Swadharmah'; hence 'Paradharmāt' should be taken by implication to be qualified by some such adjective as 'possessed of merit'. Therefore, the words 'Swanuṣṭhitāt paradharmāt' should be taken to mean a duty which, though possessed of merit and performed with scrupulous care, is not prescribed for the performer, but only for others. The special duties of a Brahman are marked by a larger proportion of noble virtues such as non-violence etc. than the duties of a Kṣatriya, a Vaiśya and a Śūdra; the duties pertaining to the order of Sannyāsa possess more merits than those pertaining to the life of a householder; even so the duties of a Vaiśya and a Kṣatriya are possessed of greater merit than the duties of a Śūdra. But just as it is spiritually beneficial for a wife to serve her husband in any case, even though he has an ugly appearance and is devoid of merit, even so that duty alone which has been prescribed for a man is good for him, no matter if it is devoid of merit on the face of it and even though it has not been fully accomplished in all its details. This is what is conveyed by the first half of this verse.

That duty alone which has been prescribed for a man with due regard to his grade in society, stage in life, temperament and circumstances etc. is 'Swadharmā' or natural duty for him. Lying, duplicity, thieving, violence, cheating, adultery and other prohibited acts are 'Swadharmā' for none; and actions motivated by desire too are binding on none. Hence they have not been recognized as the Swadharmā of any. Other than these, those that have been declared as the special duties attaching to a particular Varna or Āśrama, and for which men belonging to other Varnas

and Āśramas are not eligible, are the exclusive Swadharmā of men belonging to that particular Varna or Āśrama; while those duties which have been declared as open to every Dwija or member of the twice-born classes, viz., the study of the Vedas and the performance of sacrifices etc., are the Swadharmā of the twice-born classes. Again, those duties of a general or universal character for which men and women of all classes and Āśramas are eligible, viz., Devotion to God, truthfulness, service of one's parents, control of the senses, chastity and modesty etc. are the Swadharmā of all.

The adjective 'Vigraha' signifies deficiency of merit. The natural duty of a Kṣatriya is to engage in a conflict and punish the wicked etc. The duties of a Vaiśya, such as agriculture etc., are likewise characterized by a preponderance of evils like destruction of life and so on; hence, when compared to the peaceful duties of a Brahman, they too are devoid of merit. And as for the duties of a Śūdra, they are inferior even to those of a Vaiśya and a Kṣatriya. Besides this, the omission of a particular item or detail during the performance of a duty also constitutes a defect or imperfection.

A duty which has been prescribed by the Śāstras for a man belonging to a particular Varna or Āśrama in accordance with his temperament is 'Swabhāvanīyata' for him. Hence the words 'Swabhāvanīyatam Karma' carry the same idea as is conveyed by 'Swadharmā'. The man who performs such duty is not held responsible for the sins of violence etc. that are incidentally committed during the lawful discharge of his duty; whereas by adopting another's duty one incurs the sin of robbing another of his means, of livelihood, even though the duty adopted is comparatively free from evils, such as violence etc. This is what is meant by the latter half of this verse.

सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।

सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निविद्धताः ॥ ४८ ॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; सदोषम् अपि though tainted with blemish; सहजम् कर्म one's innate duty; न त्यजेत् (one) should not abandon; हि because; धूमेन in smoke; अग्निः इव as fire (is enveloped); सर्वारम्भाः all undertakings; दोषेण with demerit; आवृताः are clouded.

Therefore, Arjuna, one should not abandon one's innate duty, even though it may be tainted with blemish; for even as fire is enveloped in smoke, all undertakings are clouded with demerit. (48)

Those duties alone which have been prescribed for a particular man with due regard to his grade in society, stage in life, temperament and circumstances, are 'Sahaja' or innate for him. Therefore, the words 'Sahajam Karma' in this verse refer to those very duties or actions which have been variously termed in the course of this chapter as 'Swadharma', 'Swakarma', 'Niyata Karma', 'Swabhāvanīyata Karma' and 'Swabhāvaja Karma'.

The abandonment of such innate duties as are possessed of excellent virtues being out of the question, even those prescribed and legitimate duties which ordinarily appear as tainted with evils like violence etc. are not really defective, though appearing as such, and hence should not be given up. That is to say, they too should be duly performed; for far from incurring sin through their performance one is liable to be held guilty for renouncing them. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

which cannot be wholly separated from it, even so every undertaking is tainted with demerit. Every form of activity does involve in one way or other destruction of life in some form; for even in the case of those belonging to the order of recluses activities such as answering the calls of nature, bathing and begging alms from door to door involve destruction of life in some measure, and sacrifice and other acts of the Brahman too involve destruction of small creatures due to the elaborate ritual. Therefore, ordinarily speaking, the duties of any Varṇa or Āśrama whatsoever are not altogether free from blemish; and none can help doing some work (III. 5). Hence even after giving up his own duty a man must do some work; and whatever he does will be contaminated with sin. That is why a man must not give up his own duty under the belief that a particular action or duty is inferior or tainted with evil; on the other hand, he should rightly perform it renouncing the evils of mine-ness, attachment and the desire for fruit. By doing so a man's heart gets purified

Just as fire is mixed with smoke,

and he speedily attains God.

In order to expound the truth of Tyāga and Sannyāsa in response to Arjuna's enquiry, the Lord discussed the subject of Tyāga in verses 4 to 12 and expounded Sannyāsa or the path of Knowledge in verses 13 to 40 above. Then in order to enlighten Arjuna on the truth relating to Tyāga, which is only another name for Karmayoga or the path of Action, He discussed from verse 41 up to the preceding verse the nature of innate actions and their obligatory character, and

showing the alliance of Bhakti with Karmayoga pointed out God-Realization as its reward. But while on the subject of Sannyāsa the Lord did not mention its reward, nor did He point out how to practise Sāṅkhyayoga along with worship disclaiming the doership of actions. Therefore, in order to point out the method and reward of carrying on this practice in seclusion with discrimination and dispassion, the Lord resumes the discussion of Sāṅkhyayoga.

असक्तबुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः ।

नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ॥ ४९ ॥

सर्वत्र everywhere; असक्तबुद्धिः he whose intellect is unattached; विगतस्पृहः who is free from thirst for enjoyment; जितात्मा who has subdued his mind; संन्यासेन through Sāṅkhyayoga (the path of Knowledge); परमाम् नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिम् the consummation of actionlessness; अधिगच्छति attains.

He whose intellect is unattached everywhere, whose thirst for enjoyment has altogether disappeared and who has subdued his mind, reaches through Sāṅkhyayoga (the path of Knowledge) the consummation of actionlessness. (49)

'Sarvatra Asaktabuddhiḥ' is he whose attachment for the body including the mind and the senses, for the activities performed by them as well as for all enjoyments and for the whole universe including animate and inanimate beings has altogether disappeared,—in other words, whose mind and intellect no longer entertain a partiality or attraction for anything. He whose thirst for enjoyment has wholly ceased, who has no need for any worldly object, is referred to here as 'Vigatasprahā'; and 'Jitātmā' is he whose mind and senses stand subdued. The use of these three compound adjectives is intended to point out those who are qualified for the practice of

Sannyāsayoga. The idea is that he alone who is endowed with these three qualifications can attain true knowledge of God through the practice of Sāṅkhyayoga.

The word 'Sannyāseṇa' in this verse stands for Jñānayoga or the path of Knowledge. It is also called Sāṅkhyayoga. The true nature of this discipline has been discussed in verses 51 to 53 below. 'Paramām Naiṣkarmyasiddhim' means securing freedom from the bondage of Karma and attaining true knowledge of God who is beyond all change and who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, as a result of this practice.

In the above verse it is stated that one attains the highest state of actionlessness through Sannyāsa; this leads one to enquire what is the true nature of Sannyāsa (Sāṅkhyayoga) and through what process one attains the consummation of actionlessness and then Brahma Itself. Therefore, undertaking to discuss all these points the Lord invites Arjuna to hear His exposition.

सिद्धिं प्राप्नोति यथा ब्रह्म तथाऽऽप्नोति निबोध मे ।

समासेनैव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥ ५० ॥

या which (is); ज्ञानस्य of Jñānayoga or the path of Knowledge; परा highest; निष्ठा consummation; सिद्धिम् that state of actionlessness; यथा through which (process); प्राप्नोति having attained; ब्रह्म Brahma or the Absolute; आप्नोति (man) attains; तथा that (method); कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī; समासेन in brief; एव only; मे from Me; निबोध know.

Arjuna, know from Me only briefly the process through which man having attained actionlessness, which is the highest consummation of Jñānayoga (the path of Knowledge), reaches Brahma. (50)

The substantive 'Niṣṭhā', qualified by the adjective 'Parā', denotes the final stage of Jñānayoga (the path of Knowledge), which is also termed as Parā Bhakti and Tattvajñāna (the realization of Truth), which is the limit of all Sādhana or spiritual discipline. The sum-total of practices forming part of the discipline of Knowledge is called 'Jñāna-niṣṭhā' and Tattvajñāna or the realization of Truth, which is the reward of all such practices, is called the 'Parā Niṣṭhā of Knowledge'.

The 'Siddhi' referred to in this verse is the same as the 'Naiṣkarmyasiddhi' mentioned in the preceding verse; it has

been spoken of as the 'Parā Niṣṭhā' of Jñāna in the present verse and as Parā Bhakti in verse 54 below.

The realization of Brahma or the Absolute follows immediately after the attainment of this 'Siddhi'. This is what is indicated in the first half of this verse.

The word 'Brahma' stands for the eternal and immutable supreme Spirit or the Absolute, which is without form and attributes and which is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. And the attainment of Brahma consists in merging one's identity in It through the realization of Truth as mentioned in verse 55 below.

As undertaken in the preceding verse, the Lord now describes Jñānayoga in all its details in the following three verses.

बुद्ध्या विशुद्धया युक्तो धृत्वाऽऽत्मानं नियम्य च ।

शब्दादीन् विषयांस्त्यक्त्वा रागद्वेषौ व्युदस्य च ॥ ५१ ॥

विविक्तसेवी लघ्वाशी यतवाक्कायमानसः ।

ध्यानयोगपरो नित्यं वैराग्यं समुपाश्रितः ॥ ५२ ॥

अहंकारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम् ।

विमुच्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥ ५३ ॥

बुद्ध्या बुद्ध्या with an untarnished intellect; युक्तो endowed; लघ्वाशी partaking of a light, Sattvic and regulated diet; शब्दादीन् विषयान् sound and other objects of sense; त्यक्त्वा turning one's back on; विविक्तसेवी living in a lonely

and undefiled place; दृढ्या through firmness (of a Sattvic type); आत्मानम् the mind and senses; नियम्य restraining; यत्वाक्कायमानसः having controlled the mind, speech and body; रागद्वेषौ attraction and aversion; व्युदस्य wiping out; वैराग्यम् dispassion; समुपाश्रितः taking a firm stand on; च and; अहंकारम् egotism; बलम् violence; दर्पम् arrogance; कामम् lust; क्रोधम् anger; च and; परिग्रहम् luxuries; विमुच्य giving up; नित्यम् ever; ध्यानयोगपरः devoted to the Yoga of meditation; निर्ममः devoid of the feeling of meum; शान्तः tranquil of heart, calm; ब्रह्मभूयाय for oneness with Brahma (who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss); कल्पते becomes fit.

Endowed with an untarnished intellect and partaking of a light, Sattvic and regulated diet, living in a lonely and undefiled place having rejected sound and other objects of sense, having controlled the mind, speech and body by restraining the mind and senses through firmness of a Sattvic type, taking a resolute stand on dispassion, after having completely got rid of attraction and aversion and remaining ever devoted to the Yoga of meditation having given up egotism, violence, arrogance, lust, anger and luxuries, devoid of the feeling of meum and tranquil of heart,—such a man becomes qualified for oneness with Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss. (51,52 and 53)

An intellect which retains no trace of sins incurred in previous lives is referred to here by the words 'Viśuddhayā Buddhya'; and he who is possessed of such a purified intellect is called 'Buddhyā viśuddhayā yuktāḥ'.

'Lāghvāśī' is he who is regulated in diet (VI. 17), that is to say, who takes articles of food which are suitable for spiritual practice, easily digestible and Sattvic in character (XVII. 8) and whose diet is suited to his nature, needs and digestive capacity, governed by certain rules and fixed in quantity.

The word 'Viśayān' in this verse stands for all worldly pleasures of sense. The man referred to in this verse does not waste his precious time in the enjoyment of such pleasures. In order to carry on uninterrupted spiritual practice he takes up his residence on a river bank, in a place of worship, forest or mountain

cave or any other such place, which has a holy atmosphere, is not frequented by many, is naturally secluded and clean or has been cleaned by sweeping and washing. This is what is meant by the expressions 'Śabdādīn viśayān tyaktvā' and 'Viviktasevi'.

Through unwavering firmness as defined in verse 33 above, and with irreproachable persistence he empties his mind of all thoughts of mundane objects and does not allow the senses to run after worldly enjoyments. This is what is meant by the phrase 'Dhṛtyā ātmānam niyamya'. And through such discipline he succeeds in subduing the mind, senses and body—robs them of their freedom as well as of their capacity to unsettle the intellect. This is what is sought to be conveyed by the compound adjective 'Yatavākkāya-mānasah'.

Attraction and aversion lie hidden in all enjoyments of sense, they are great

enemies of the striver (III. 34). Therefore, wiping out from one's mind all traces of attraction or aversion for any enjoyment of this world or the next, or for any living being, object, activity or occurrence—this is what is meant by the phrase 'Rāgadweṣau vyudasya'; and he who remains ever merged in dispassion is said to have taken a firm stand on Vairāgya—'Vairāgyam Samupāśritāḥ'.

'Ahankāra' is the feeling of identification with one's body, senses and mind; it is due to this that man comes to regard himself as the doer in relation to what is being done by the mind, intellect and body. Therefore, completely getting rid of this feeling of self-identification with the body is what is meant by giving up egotism. The audacity to bring others under one's sway in a wrongful manner through coercion is called 'Balam' or violence; vain consciousness of one's riches, large family, learning, birth and physical strength etc. is known as 'Darpa' or arrogance; the longing for obtaining the enjoyments of this world and the next is spoken of as 'Kāma'; the feeling of excitement or provocation aroused in the mind when somebody acts against one's will or behaves wrongfully,—which manifests itself in the form of blood-shot eyes, the throbbing of lips, a burning sensation in the heart and a distortion of the face, is termed as 'Krodha'. The means of enjoyment taken together are known as 'Parigraha'; hence giving up 'Parigraha' primarily means actually shunning all luxuries or objects of enjoyment. Broadly speaking, however, even he who does accumulate objects, but not with the idea of enjoying them, may be indirectly said to renounce 'Parigraha'.

Giving up all these and suspending the function of the mind and senses through the Sattvic form of Dhṛti and

completely eliminating all worldly thoughts, a Sāṅkhyayogi constantly contemplates on Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified, as his own self (VI. 25). He continues to dwell on the divine truth or being of God at all times—while awake or asleep, sitting or standing, and even while performing unavoidable bodily functions such as answering the calls of nature, bathing, eating and drinking and so on,—and regards this as his supreme and paramount duty. This is what is meant by remaining devoted to the Yoga of meditation.

'Nirmamaḥ' is he who completely renounces the feeling of 'mine' in respect of the body including the mind and senses, in respect of all living beings, actions, and enjoyments and even with regard to one's birth, race, nationality, grade in society and stage in life—who ceases to distinguish an object, activity or living being as his own or alien.

As a result of the above practices, the mind of the Sāṅkhyayogi is no longer distracted by worldly thoughts and is ever pervaded by an unruffled calm and pure, Sattvic joy. The quietist who is possessed of such a tranquil mind is called 'Śāntaḥ'.

A man who is endowed with all these accomplishments not only becomes eligible for oneness with Brahma but immediately becomes one with the Absolute. That is to say, the distinction between the soul and the Oversoul no longer exists in his eyes and the realization that he is no other than Brahma,—who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified,—gets firmly rooted in him. 'In that state he beholds his own self as projected in the whole universe and the whole universe as conceived in his own being (VI. 29).

Having thus discussed the true nature of Sannyāsa or Sāṅkhyayoga (the path of Knowledge) in all its details, the Lord now points out the marks of the

Yogi who has become one with Brahma through the practice of that discipline, and tells us how he reaches the culmination of Jñānayoga, termed as Parā Bhakti.

ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।

समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥ ५४ ॥

ब्रह्मभूतः the Sāṅkhyayogī who has become one with Brahma (who is Truth, .Consciousness and Bliss solidified); प्रसन्नात्मा cheerful in mind; न no longer; शोचति grieves (for anyone); न nor; काङ्क्षति craves (for anything); सर्वेषु भूतेषु to all beings; समः the same; पराम् मद्भक्तिम् supreme devotion to Me; लभते (he) attains.

Established in identity with Brahma, (who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified), and cheerful in mind, the Sāṅkhyayogī no longer grieves nor craves for anything. The same to all beings, such a Yogī attains supreme devotion to Me. (54)

The compound word 'Brahmabhūtaḥ' refers to the Sāṅkhyayogī who has become one with the Absolute, in whose eye everything other than Brahma ceases to exist, who is 'ever irrevocably established in identity with God according to the spirit of the great formulas or Mahāvākyas "I am Brahma" (*Bṛh. Up.*, I. iv. 10), "I am That" and so on. Verse 24 of Chapter V and verse 27 of Chapter VI also speak of the Yogī who has reached this state as 'Brahmabhūta'.

'Prasannātmā is he whose mind is sinless, free from impurities and unruffled, and ever remains merged in pure delight. The use of this adjective is intended to convey that everything other than Brahma having ceased to exist in the eyes of the man who has attained oneness with Brahma, his mind is ever calm and never gets excited on any account.

The words 'Na śoçati na kāṅkṣati' represent the distinguishing marks of the Yogī who has attained oneness with Brahma. The idea is that having come to recognize Brahma in everything such a Yogī no longer differentiates any object from himself nor regards anything as attractive

nor entertains the feeling of 'mine' with regard to anything. That is why it makes no difference to him when anyone gets united with or disjoined from the body etc. Hence on no account and in no circumstance whatsoever does he give way to grief or anxiety to the least degree. And he gets sated inasmuch as he ceases to view anything as other than Brahma; hence he craves for nothing.

The adjectival phrase 'Sarveṣu bhūteṣu samāḥ' is intended to show his feeling of non-differentiation towards all beings. The idea is that the Sāṅkhyayogī referred to above does not view any living being as other than himself; hence he ceases to differentiate one from another. He comes to develop the feeling of oneness towards all. This very idea has been brought out in verse 29 of Chapter VI by the words 'Sarvatra Samadarśanaḥ'.

The compound word 'Madbhaktim', qualified by the adjective 'Parām', denotes that which is the fruit of Jñānayoga and which is also termed as the culmination of Jñāna and the realization of Truth; for having revealed the true nature of God it unites one with Him.

Declaring thus that the Sāṅkhyayogī who has become one with Brahma attains 'Parā Bhakti', the Lord now points out its reward.

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान् यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।

ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥ ५५ ॥

भक्त्या through (that) devotion; माम् Me (the supreme Spirit); यः what (I am); च and; यावान् of what magnitude; अस्मि (I) am; तत्त्वतः in truth; अभिजानाति comes to know; ततः (and) through that (devotion); माम् Me; तत्त्वतः in reality; ज्ञात्वा having known; तदनन्तरम् immediately; विशते enters (into My being).

Through that supreme devotion he comes to know Me in reality, what and how great I am; and thereby knowing Me in essence he forthwith enters into My being. (55)

The word 'Bhakti' in this verse refers to the same realization of Truth which has been spoken of as 'Parā Madbhaktim' in the preceding verse and as the culmination of knowledge in verse 50. This is the fruit of Jñānayoga, Bhaktiyoga, Karmayoga, Dhyānayoga and all other disciplines; it is through this that all strivers attain true knowledge of God and realize God Himself. It is in order to point out the identity of the fruit of all disciplines that the word 'Bhakti' has been used in this context dealing with Jñānayoga.

Synchronously with the attainment of this Parā Bhakti, which is only another name for the realization of Truth, the Sāṅkhyayogī referred to above comes to know the real character of God with the help of that realization. The nature of His absolute, formless aspect, His qualified formless aspect as well as of His qualified aspect with form, and how He emerges with a form from the formless state and how He withdraws His form and reverts to the formless state—all this becomes known to him. That is why diversity of any kind ceases to exist in his eyes. It is in order to reveal the identity of God in His qualified aspect

with the absolute, formless Brahma, attained through the practice of Jñānayoga or the discipline of Knowledge, that the Lord has used the personal pronoun 'Mām'.

The indeclinable 'Tataḥ' implies cause. God-Realization takes place as soon as the essential character or true nature of God is known—there is no interval or lapse of time between the two events; hence the word has not been interpreted to mean 'thereafter'. The word 'Tataḥ' refers to a cause which forms the subject of discussion; and it was also necessary to repeat the cause along with the verb 'Jñātvā'; hence 'Tataḥ' should be taken to refer to the 'Parā Bhakti' mentioned in the first half of the verse.

The compound adverb 'Tadanantaram', even though it follows the verb 'Jñātvā', does not imply sequence of time. The use of the verb 'Jñātvā' (having known) no doubt gives one the impression that the Sāṅkhyayogī enters into the being of God some time after realizing the truth about Him. But it is in order to remove this impression that the Lord uses the word 'Tadanantaram'. The idea is that there is no interval or lapse of time between the knowledge of the true

nature of God and His own realization; true knowledge of His essential character and entering into His being—both come together. God, being the Self of all, is not really something unattained by any; therefore, He is realized as soon as His reality is known. Hence it is in order to bring out this idea that the word 'Tadanantaram' has been taken to mean 'immediately' or 'at once'. For the verb 'Jñātvā' was enough to denote sequence of time; the use of the word 'Tadanantaram' would, therefore, become superfluous or redundant if it were taken in that sense.

Having thus expounded severally the truth relating to Tyāga or Karma-yoga on the one hand and that of Sannyāsa or Sāṅkhyayoga on the other in response to the enquiry of Arjuna, the Lord concluded here the discussion of Sāṅkhyayoga. He, however, did not tell him which of the two disciplines should be followed by him. Therefore, with a view to inducing him to adopt Karmayoga with special emphasis on Bhakti, the Lord now glorifies Karmayoga dominated by Bhakti.

सर्वकर्माण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मद्बन्धुपाश्रयः ।

मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमन्ययम् ॥ ५६ ॥

मद्बन्धुपाश्रयः (the Karmayogi) who has taken refuge in Me; सर्वकर्माणि all (his) duties; सदा ever; कुर्वाणः performing; अपि even; मत्प्रसादात् by My grace; शाश्वतम् अन्ययम् पदम् the eternal, imperishable supreme state or abode; अवाप्नोति attains.

The Karmayogi, however, who depends on Me, attains by My grace the eternal, imperishable state, even though performing all actions. (56)

The compound adjective 'Mad-vyapāśrayaḥ' in this verse refers to the man who practises Karmayoga with special emphasis on Bhakti. Such a Karmayogi gives up dependence on all actions and their fruit in the shape of all enjoyments and takes refuge in God alone. Having dedicated his body, including the mind and senses, and all its activities as well as their fruit to God, he no longer treats them as his own, withdraws his attachment from them and ceases to hanker for anything, and remains exclusively devoted to Him. He looks upon God as his supreme goal, the highest object of his love, his greatest well-wisher, chief supporter and sole riches, and remains cheerful under all circumstances taking them to be a dispensation of God. That is to say, he never rejoices nor grieves over the appearance or

disappearance of any worldly object or over any event and ever depends on God. Whatever he does he does according to His behest, for His pleasure, and under His guidance and inspiration regarding himself as a mere instrument and working just as he is made to work, and views himself as entirely subject to His control. All this is covered by the adjective 'Madvyapāśrayaḥ'.

The compound word 'Sarvakarmāṇi' covers all duties that have been prescribed in the Śāstras with due regard to the Varna and Āśrama of an individual, that have been referred to above by the terms 'Niyatam Karma' and 'Swabhāvajam Karma' and which conform to the commandments and directions of God.

The use of the particle 'Api' is intended to glorify the man who practises

Karmayoga with special emphasis on Bhakti, and to show that Karmayoga is easy to practise. The idea is that while the Sāṅkhyayogī realizes God by renouncing all luxuries and enjoyments and practising constant meditation on God in a lonely place, the Karmayogī who has taken refuge in God realizes the same God even while performing all duties appropriate to his Varna or grade in society and Āsrama or stage in life. There is no disparity whatsoever in the fruit of the two disciplines.

The substantive 'Padam', qualified by the adjectives 'Śāśwatam' and 'Avyayam', stands for the almighty and all-supporting God, who has existed from eternity and remains for ever, who never ceases to be, and who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. He has been called

'Padam' in order to show that He alone is the supreme goal. The same principle which has been termed as 'Sāṃsiddhi' in verse 45 above, as 'Siddhi' in the next verse and as 'Mām' or God in verse 55 above, has been referred to in the present verse as the eternal, imperishable state. The idea is that the same truth has been called by different names. Impressed and pleased with the sentiment of the man practising Karmayoga with special emphasis on Bhakti, the Lord confers on him of His own accord the Yoga of wisdom known as Parā Bhakti (X. 10); realizing the true nature of God through that Buddhiyoga the devotee becomes one with or gets merged in God, who is Truth, Knowledge and Bliss solidified. This is what is meant by the latter half of this verse.

Extolling thus the man who practises Karmayoga with the element of Bhakti preponderating in it, the Lord now commands Arjuna to become such a Karmayogī.

चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्परः ।

बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव ॥ ५७ ॥

सर्वकर्माणि all duties or actions ; चेतसा mentally ; मयि to Me ; संन्यस्य resigning ; बुद्धियोगम् Yoga in the form of even-mindedness ; उपाश्रित्य (and) adopting ; मत्परः exclusively devoted to Me ; सततं मच्चित्तः with your mind constantly given to Me ; भव be.

Mentally resigning all your duties to Me, and taking recourse to Yoga in the form of even-mindedness, be solely devoted to Me and constantly give your mind to Me. (57)

The man who resigns all his actions to God feels that his mind, senses and body, the activities performed by them and everything in the world belong to Him, and accordingly ceases to look upon any of these as his own, withdraws attachment from them and no longer craves for anything. He believes that he is incapable of doing anything, that it is God who infuses the necessary energy

into him and gets everything done by him according to His own will, while he does nothing himself. And believing thus he continues to perform all actions according to His behest, for His sake and under His guidance and inspiration acting as a mere instrument or puppet.

Viewing success and failure, joy and sorrow, gain and loss and similarly a

objects and living beings as alike is what is referred to here as Buddhiyoga. Therefore, believing that whatever happens in the world is controlled by the will and promptings of God, he who no longer entertains the discriminative feelings of attraction and aversion, delight and grief, etc. in respect of the various objects, living beings and occurrences, and remains equipoised under all circumstances, is said to have taken recourse to the Yoga of equanimity.

He who is exclusively devoted to God ('Matparah') looks upon Him as his supreme goal, highest asylum, greatest well-wisher, dearest object of love and chief support. He is ever contented with His dispensation and remains devoted to

practices for God-Realization.

Even so 'Matchittah' is he who has his mind and intellect irrevocably fastened on God. Conceiving not the least attachment for anyone other than God, he remains solely engaged in thinking of God in terms of exclusive love. Even a moment's gap in the thought of God becomes unbearable to him. He continues to perceive Him with his mind at all times, even while he is sitting or standing, walking or moving from one place to another, eating or drinking, dreaming or awake, and doing everything else. This is what Arjuna has been asked to do in the concluding verse of Chapter IX as also in verse 65 of the present chapter by the words "Manmanā bhava."

Having thus commanded Arjuna to practise Karmayoga with special emphasis on Bhakti, the Lord now points out to him the reward of obeying His command and shows what great harm will befall him in the event of his not obeying Him.

मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि ।

अथ चेत्त्वमहंकारात् न श्रोष्यसि विनङ्क्ष्यसि ॥ ५८ ॥

मच्चित्तः with your mind given to Me (in the aforesaid manner); त्वम् you; मत्प्रसादात् by My grace; सर्वदुर्गाणि all difficulties; तरिष्यसि you shall tide over; अथ and; चेत् if; अहंकारात् from egotism; न श्रोष्यसि you will not listen; विनङ्क्ष्यसि you will be lost.

With your mind thus given to Me, you shall tide over all difficulties by My grace. And if, from egotism, you will not listen, you will be lost. (58)

Having resigned all his actions to God in the manner suggested above, and constantly fixing his mind on Him, Arjuna would be required to do nothing more. By the Lord's grace all his sorrows in this world as well as in the next would be easily obviated. Rid of all vices and evil propensities, he would be exempted for ever from the great ordeal in the shape of birth and death and would attain God, who is eternal Bliss solidified. This what the Lord seeks to convey in the first half of this verse.

Arjuna was a devotee and beloved friend of the Lord; he was, therefore, sure to obey Him. The Lord, however, warned Arjuna that just as obedience to Him was highly beneficial, disobedience to Him involved great risk; therefore, if from self-conceit Arjuna did not obey the Lord and acted according to his own will he was doomed. In that case he would have no real peace or joy in this world or the next and lapsing from his duty he would fall from the spiritual level already attained by him. This is what the Lord

seeks to impress on Arjuna in the latter half of the verse.

The Lord has on a previous occasion acknowledged Arjuna as his devotee (IV. 3) and has further proclaimed that his devotee never falls (IX. 31). In the present verse, however, He warns Arjuna against a fall. How is this to be reconciled with His former estimation of Arjuna? In this connection it may be submitted that the Lord has already met this objection by the use of the conditional

conjunction 'Chait'. It is no doubt an axiomatic truth that a devotee of God never falls; and it is equally true that Arjuna was supremely devoted to the Lord. That he should not listen to the Lord, and should disobey Him, was, therefore, something out of the question. Nevertheless, should he prove so self-conceited as to disobey Him, he could no longer be counted as a devotee of God, and in that eventuality it was but reasonable that he should fall.

In the preceding verse the Lord plainly told Arjuna that he was sure to fall if he proved conceited enough to disobey Him. In support of this very statement the Lord now points out in the following two verses that his resolve was not a sound one.

यदहंकारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे ।

मिथ्यैव व्यवसायस्ते प्रकृतिस्त्वां नियोक्ष्यति ॥ ५९ ॥

यत् if; अहंकारम् egotism; आश्रित्य taking your stand on; न योत्स्ये I will not fight; इति thus; मन्यसे you think; ते your; एषः this; व्यवसायः resolve; मिथ्या (is) vain; प्रकृतिः nature; त्वाम् you; नियोक्ष्यति drive (to the act).

If, taking your stand on egotism, you think "I will not fight", vain is this resolve of yours; nature will drive you to the act. (59)

Commanded by the Lord on a previous occasion to fight (II. 3), Arjuna bluntly said, "I will not fight." (II. 9.) The first half of the present verse has reference to that refusal on the part of Arjuna. The idea is that the resolve of Arjuna not to fight was nothing but a display of vanity on his part: he was not free to desist from war. It was, therefore, most undesirable that Arjuna should thus allow himself to be possessed by egotism born of ignorance, and should accordingly regard himself as wise, competent and free and take upon himself on the strength of such egotism the responsibility of accomplishing a particular act in a particular way and make up his mind to desist from a particular course of action. This is what the Lord seeks to impress upon Arjuna in the first half of this verse.

By denouncing Arjuna's resolve as a mere display of his vanity the Lord seeks to convey that he would not be able to stick to his resolve, i. e., he could not remain aloof from war; for he was not free to act, he was subject to his nature.

The word 'Prakṛti' in this verse denotes the sum-total of tendencies formed as a result of actions performed through a number of lives, and manifesting themselves in the current life of an individual in the form of temperament or disposition; it is also called the nature of an individual. It is this nature that determines the birth of a soul in a community endowed with an aptitude for a particular type of actions; and it is under the influence of this nature that different individuals are inclined towards diverse types of actions. The words 'Prakṛti'

twām niyoksyati' are, therefore, intended to impress upon Arjuna that the nature which had caused his birth in the Kṣatriya race would perforce drive him even against his will to war. To put up a heroic fight when the occasion demanded it and not to lose heart or flee from a battle was his natural duty; hence Arjuna could not help performing his duty, he needs must fight. What Arjuna has been told about war on account of his being a Kṣatriya should be understood by members of other castes to apply to their own natural duties.

स्वभावजेन कौन्तेय निबद्धः स्वेन कर्मणा ।

कर्तुं नेच्छसि यन्मोहात्करिष्यस्यवशोऽपि तत् ॥ ६० ॥

कौन्तेय O son of Kuntī, Arjuna; यत् (the action) which; मोहात् through ignorance; कर्तुम् to do; न इच्छसि you are not willing; तत् that; अपि too; स्वेन स्वभावजेन कर्मणा by your own past action born of your nature; निबद्धः bound; अवशः helplessly; करिष्यसि you will do.

That action too which you are not willing to undertake through ignorance,—bound by your own duty born of your nature, you will helplessly perform. (60)

Kuntī, Arjuna's mother, was a very brave lady; while sending her message through Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself she incited the Pāṇḍavas to war. Therefore, by addressing Arjuna as Kuntī's son, He seeks to impress on him that being the son of a brave mother and a heroic soul himself, he would not be able to keep aloof from war.

Arjuna was a Kṣatriya, fighting was his natural duty; hence it was not sinful for him to participate in war. Under such circumstances, it was in no way desirable for him to seek to avoid it. That he was nevertheless unwilling to perform his natural duty in the shape of fighting in a righteous cause showed nothing but want of thought on his part; otherwise there was no sufficient ground for his shirking the duty. This is what the Lord seeks to convey by the words 'Kartum na itchhasi yat mohāt'.

Again, fighting was a natural duty with Arjuna; hence he was bound by it, i. e., intimately connected with it. Under such circumstances, it would drag him

perforce to it even against his will and impelled by his nature he would have to do it. Therefore, if he did it as the Lord bade him do, i. e., according to the process laid down in verse 57 above, Arjuna would be freed from the bondage of Karma and realize the Lord; or else being caught in the meshes of attraction and aversion he would continue to drift in the ocean of mundane existence in the form of birth and death. This is what the Lord seeks to impress on Arjuna in the present verse.

The idea is that a man who is being carried away by the current of a river can never be able to cross it by forcing his way against the current; while he who moves along the current by catching hold of a barge or a log of wood or by floating on the surface of water through the art of swimming reaches the bank and even goes beyond it. Similarly, the man who having been caught in the stream of Prakṛti struggles against it, i. e., wilfully neglects his duties, cannot go beyond Nature, but on the other hand

gets involved in it more and more; while he who betaking himself to God or to Karmayoga (the path of Action) or rising above Prakṛti according to the process of Jñānayoga, continues to perform duties according to his nature, is freed from the bondage of Karma and transcends Prakṛti, i. e., realizes God.

In the foregoing verses man has been declared as dependent on his nature in the matter of performing actions. Here one may ask: Prakṛti or nature is unconscious, how can it bring anyone under its sway? The Lord, therefore, says:—

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।

भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥ ६१ ॥

अर्जुन O Arjuna; यन्त्रारूढानि mounted on the vehicle of the body; सर्वभूतानि all living beings; ईश्वरः God (who is their inner controller); मायया by His illusive power; भ्रामयन् turning round and round (according to their respective Karmas); सर्वभूतानाम् of all creatures; हृद्देशे in the heart; तिष्ठति abides.

Arjuna, God abides in the heart of all creatures, causing them to revolve according to their Karma by His illusive power, seated as those beings are in the vehicle of the body. (61)

Though the man who is seated in a vehicle moves not himself, the motion of the vehicle imparts locomotion to him; even so though the Self is immovable—is really speaking wholly beyond all activity,—yet, being identified with a body due to ignorance that has existed from time without beginning, the activity of the body is attributed to the Soul. This is what the Lord means by figuratively speaking of the body as a vehicle.

The driver who propels a vehicle remains in the vehicle himself; even so God dwells in the heart of all creatures and it is while seated in their heart that He causes them to revolve according to their Karma. Hence no decree of God is liable to the least error; for all-powerful, all-pervading and omniscient as He is, He is fully aware of all the doings of those creatures. This is what is meant by the first half of this verse.

In order to reward or punish the various Jivas or embodied souls according to the doings of their previous lives

God causes them to be born in different species. He unites them with or disjoins them from various objects, activities and living beings and urges them to newer forms of activity in accordance with their nature. This is how God causes living beings to revolve through His Māyā.

This raises the question of freedom of will. Is man free to act according to his will or does he depend for his actions on any other agency? If he is dependent, what is the nature of his dependence and on whom does he depend—on his own nature or on Prakṛti or God? For at one place man has been declared free as having the right to act (II. 47), and at another place as subject to his individual nature (III. 33) and at a third place as dependent on God (X. 8). In this very chapter he has been declared as dependent on or subject to his own peculiar nature in verses 59 and 60 and in the present verse as dependent on God. This point evidently needs elucidation.

In this connection it may be submitted that man is neither free to act nor to abstain from action. That is why it has been said that no living being can remain inactive even for a moment (III. 5). Even the statement that man has the right to act is intended not to declare him free but only to proclaim him as dependent; for he has thereby been pronounced as incapable of giving up action. Now as regards the agency on which he depends, our submission is that it is just the same to call him as dependent on Prakṛti, on his own nature or on God. For, as a matter of fact, Prakṛti and nature are synonymous terms; and as for God, He urges the different Jivas or embodied souls to action through His illusive power according to their individual nature in quite an unconcerned way, i. e., remaining altogether unaffected or unattached. Therefore, to call a man dependent on God is just the same as to declare him subject to his own nature. In the alternative case it is God who is the lord and director of Prakṛti, so that even to call a man as subject to his own nature is tantamount to calling him dependent on God.

Here it may be asked: If man is absolutely dependent, what is the way of redeeming him and what need is there for scriptures determining what a man should do and what he should not. Our reply to this question is that the Śāstras are not intended to divert a man from his natural duties or to urge him to acts which are antagonistic to his nature. Their intention is to deter him from wrongful acts which he is liable to commit under the impulse of likes and dislikes while discharging his duties, and to encourage him to perform his duties in a righteous spirit. Hence, though bound by his own nature in performing actions, he is not so fettered in the matter of reforming this nature. Therefore, waking up as a result of the teachings of the Śāstras and holy men, if he takes refuge in Almighty God, who is the director of Prakṛti, and, giving up morbid feelings such as those of attraction and aversion etc., rightly performs his natural duties in a disinterested spirit according to the scriptural injunctions, he can surely be redeemed.

In the preceding verse it has been proved that man is not free to abandon his duties, he is driven to his natural duties under the prompting of his own nature; for Almighty God, who remains seated in the heart of all as their inner controller, causes all living beings to revolve according to their own nature and it is not possible for man to resist His prompting. The question, therefore, arises: If such is the case, what should a man do in order to get rid of the bondage of Karma and attain supreme peace? Thereupon the Lord prescribes the duty for Arjuna in the following verse:—

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।

तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥ ६२ ॥

भारत O descendant of Bharata; सर्वभावेन with all your being; तम् Him (God); एव alone; शरणम् गच्छ take refuge in; तत्प्रसादात् by His mere grace; पराम् शान्तिम् supreme peace; शाश्वतम् स्थानम् (and) the eternal state; प्राप्स्यसि you shall attain to.

Take shelter in Him alone with all your being, Arjuna. By His mere grace you shall attain supreme peace and the eternal state. (62)

The personal pronoun 'Tam' refers to the same almighty, all-supporting and all-pervading God, who is the director and inner controller of all and has been spoken of in the preceding verse as seated in the heart of all living beings. And he who, having offered his mind, intellect, senses, and vital airs, as well as all his wealth and relations etc. to Him, throws his entire responsibility on Him is said to have taken refuge in Him with all his being.

That is to say, having devoutly ascertained the virtues, glory, truth and essential character of God, such a man looks upon Him alone as his supreme goal and safest retreat, chief support and total wealth; and recognizing Him as his lord, protector, supporter, director and greatest well-wisher he depends on Him in every way and is rid of all fear. Regarding everything as belonging to God and feeling His presence everywhere, he gives up the feeling of mineness and the sense of doership, as well as attachment and desire, in respect of all actions and serves God, seated in the heart of all living beings, according to His behests through the performance of his duties.

Whatever pleasurable or painful experiences he is subjected to, he treats them as a boon sent by God and remains ever satisfied. He never feels the least aggrieved over any dispensation of Providence. Turning his back on honour, fame and prestige he never entertains the feeling of mineness or attachment in respect of anything other than God. With utmost reverence and exclusive attachment he ever continues to hear, reflect on and recite the names, virtues, glory, stories, truth and essential character of God. All these sentiments and practices are covered by taking refuge in God with all one's being.

The devotee who takes refuge in God in the aforesaid manner begins to receive a never-ending flood of grace from the supremely compassionate, benevolent and almighty God, which washes away all his sorrows and bondage. Thus rid of all sorrows and bondage the devotee is filled with supreme joy and realizes the eternal Brahma or God, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. This is what is meant by his attaining supreme peace and the eternal supreme abode through the grace of God.

Thus commanding Arjuna to take refuge in God, the inner controller of all, the Lord now winds up His teaching on the subject and says:—

इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद् गुह्यतरं मया ।

विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥ ६३ ॥

इति thus; गुह्याद् गुह्यतरम् more secret than secrecy itself; ज्ञानम् wisdom; मया by Me; ते to you; आख्यातम् has been imparted; एतत् this (esoteric wisdom); अशेषेण fully; विमृश्य pondering carefully; यथा as; इच्छसि you like; तथा accordingly; कुरु do.

Thus has this wisdom, more secret than secrecy itself, been imparted to you by Me. Fully pondering it, do as you like. (63)

The particle 'Iti' in this verse marks the conclusion of the gospel and covers all that has been taught by the Lord from verse 11 of Chapter II up to the preceding verse.

The word 'Jñānam' covers the entire range of the Lord's teachings—whatever He has told Arjuna from verse 11 of Chapter II to the preceding verse with a view to unfolding in clear terms the

secret of His virtues, glory, truth and essential character. The whole of this teaching is conducive to the direct knowledge of God, hence it has been termed as 'Jñāna' (wisdom). Of all those secrets in the secular as well as in the sacred domain that have been considered as worth keeping from general knowledge, the teaching which gives a correct idea of the virtues, glory and essential character of God has been recognized as the most esoteric. The use of the qualification 'Guhyāt guhyataram' with 'Jñānam' is, therefore, intended to bring out the glory of this teaching as well as to impress on Arjuna's mind the truth that these things should not be revealed before the unqualified.

The personal pronoun 'Mayā' has been used by the Lord to show that none else could expound the truth of His divine virtues, glory and essential character as He Himself would do; hence the wisdom taught by Him above was exceedingly valuable. Even so the use of the pronoun 'Te' is intended to convey that the wisdom referred to above has been imparted by the Lord for the spiritual well-being of Arjuna considering him as qualified to receive it. And the passive participle 'Ākhyātam' indicates that whatever the Lord had got to say on the subject had already been told; and that He had nothing more to say.

Commencing His teaching from verse 11 of Chapter II, the Lord declared the

vocation of fighting at more than one places (II. 18, 37; III. 30; VIII. 7; XI. 34) as the duty of Arjuna according to both Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga, the disciplines of Knowledge and Action, and exhorted him to take refuge in Him. Then, after fully expounding in Chapter XVIII the truth of Sannyāsa (Sāṅkhya) and Tyāga (Yoga) in response to Arjuna's enquiry, He reiterated in verses 56 and 57 the glory of Karmayoga with the element of Bhakti preponderating in it and invited him to approach Him for shelter. Nevertheless, since Arjuna did not express his willingness to do so, the Lord once more showed the unique reward of obeying His commands to that effect and also pointed out the great risk involved in disobeying Him. When Arjuna made no answer even then, the Lord deemed it necessary to caution him; and with that end in view He told him that God was the inspirer of all and dwelt in the heart of all, and accordingly asked him to betake himself to Him. When Arjuna remained silent even on this, the Lord wound up His teaching in the first half of the present verse; and glorifying the teaching already imparted, He admonished Arjuna to ponder the same and in conclusion asked him to do as he liked (यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु). In other words, He exhorted Arjuna to follow any of the several disciplines taught by Him, viz., Karmayoga, Jñānayoga and Bhaktiyoga etc., whichever appealed to him, or to do whatever he thought fit.

When Arjuna made no answer even on being thus asked to decide on his course after pondering the entire range of the Lord's teaching, and when he got despondent as it were, thinking himself to be unqualified and unable to determine his duty, the Lord, who is the inner controller of all and knows the mind of all, took compassion on Arjuna of his own accord, and with the intention of telling him the quintessence of the whole teaching of the Gītā, said:—

सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः ।

इष्टोऽसि मे ददमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥ ६४ ॥

सर्वगुह्यतमम् the most esoteric of all; मे My; परमम् supremely secret; वचः

word; भूयः again, once more; शृणु hear; मे to Me; दृढम् इष्टः exceedingly dear; असि you are; ततः therefore; इति this; हितम् salutary (advice); ते to you; वक्ष्यामि I shall offer.

Hear, again, My supremely secret word, the most esoteric of all truths. You are extremely dear to Me; therefore, I shall offer you this salutary advice. (64)

All that the Lord has told Arjuna so far is worth preserving as a secret; hence the Lord has spoken of it time and again as 'supremely esoteric' and 'the supreme secret'. Of all those teachings, again, the words in which He has revealed His own virtues, glory, greatness, essential character and divine power, that is to say, wherever He has declared Himself as no other than the all-pervading, all-supporting, all-powerful God, who is both with and without attributes, and asked Arjuna to practise His adoration and take shelter in Him, are worth keeping from others' knowledge more than anything else. That is why the Lord has used the adjective 'Guhyatamam' (most secret) in the opening verse of Chapter IX and the word 'Rājaguhyaṁ' (the sovereign secret) in the very next; for, fully describing His own virtues, glory, essential character, mystery and divinity in that chapter, He has clearly asked Arjuna to practise His worship and place himself under His protection. Even so, while introducing once more the topic of self-surrender to Himself in Chapter X, the Lord has similarly used the adjective 'Paramam' with 'Vachah' in the very opening verse. In the same way, by using the qualifications 'Sarvaguhyatamam' and 'Paramam' with 'Vachah' in the present verse, the Lord indicates that He would deliver to Arjuna in the next two verses the most important and esoteric part of His teaching.

The secret that the Lord seeks to

confide to Arjuna in the following two verses has been communicated to him even before (IX. 34; XII. 6,7; XVIII. 56-57). Arjuna, however, failed to take special note of it; that is why, sifting that most valuable gospel from the entire body of His teachings He was going to repeat it once more and expected that Arjuna would carefully listen to it and treasure it. This is what is implied by the use of the words 'Bhūyaḥ śṛṇu'.

In the preceding verse the Lord directed Arjuna to use his independent judgment in determining his duty, He did not keep to Himself the responsibility in respect of the same. This filled the mind of Arjuna with dejection. He wondered why the Lord spoke to him in that strain and began to doubt his faith in the Lord, his devotion and attachment to Him. Therefore, with a view to driving away the despondency of Arjuna and in order to cheer him up, the Lord assures him that he was exceptionally dear to Him, that the tie of love obtaining between them was indissoluble; hence he need not feel downcast. This is what He seeks to impress upon him through the words 'Iṣṭaḥ asi Me dṛḍham'.

The indeclinable 'Tataḥ' implies cause. The Lord thereby shows that, Arjuna being His most intimate friend, He would keep nothing from Arjuna and would confide the most esoteric truth to him in his own interest, and that whatever He would tell Arjuna would prove highly beneficial to him.

The Lord now unfolds the secret of all secrets that He promised in the preceding verse to reveal.

मन्मना भव मङ्गको मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥ ६५ ॥

मन्मना भव give your mind to Me; मङ्गकः (be) My devotee; मद्याजी (be) My worshipper; माम् to Me; नमस्कुरु bow; माम् to Me; एव alone; एष्यसि you will come; ते to you; सत्यम् truly; प्रतिजाने I promise; मे My; प्रियः beloved; असि you are.

Give your mind to Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me and bow to Me. Doing so you will come to Me alone, I truly promise you; for you are exceptionally dear to Me. (65)

Knowing the Lord as all-powerful, all-supporting, all-wise, all-pervading, the ruler and inner controller of all, and a veritable ocean of surpassing beauty, love, divinity and other virtues, he who steadily fixes his mind on Him with exclusive love and cannot bear even a moment's separation from Him is said to have given his mind to Him. For a detailed explanation of the term 'Manmanah' the reader is referred to the commentary on the concluding verse of Chapter IX.

A devotee of the Lord recognizes Him as his only supporter, master, guardian, supreme goal and chief support, and places himself wholly under the Lord's control. He does not reserve the least freedom to himself and entirely depends on the Lord. He remains ever contented with every dispensation of the Lord, obeys Him under all circumstances, and loves Him with an undivided heart and with utmost reverence. This is what the Lord expects Arjuna to do when He asks Arjuna to be devoted to Him.

A votary of the Lord offers worship to His image with reverence, devotion and love, by means of leaves and flowers as mentioned in verse 26 of Chapter IX. He invokes the Lord's presence with his heart and worships the Lord mentally. He reveres the Lord's utterances, the scene of His sports, and His images in every way; and realizing the Lord's presence everywhere or treating all living beings as His own manifestations

he renders them appropriate service and homage and treats them with due honour and respect. All this is included in His worship. The subject has been discussed more fully in the commentary on verses 26 to 28 and 34 of Chapter IX.

The personal pronoun 'Mām' in this verse stands for the integral Divinity or the Supreme Person, who is all-powerful and adorned with all virtues, who is the inner controller and the chief support of all, who has many aspects such as qualified and unqualified, formless and endowed with form, and so on. It is He who manifested Himself in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and is represented here as delivering His gospel of the Gītā to Arjuna. It is He, again, who manifested Himself as Śrī Rāma in the Tretā age and set up the ideal of virtue. And He is the same who manifested Himself in the form of a man-lion in the Satyayuga and rescued Prahlaḍa.

Prostration before any image, picture, footprints or wooden sandals of the Lord or before the scriptures depicting His virtues, glory and truth, or bowing to all living beings realizing His presence in all or regarding all as His manifestations or living images—this is what is meant by bowing to the Lord. The idea has been elaborated in the concluding verse of Chapter IX.

By adopting the course of discipline indicated in the above paragraphs one is sure to realize the almighty Lord, who

is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. What is meant by His realization has also been pointed out in the commentary on the concluding verse of Chapter IX.

Arjuna was a beloved devotee and friend of the Lord. Therefore, out of love and kindly feelings towards him the Lord was anxious that Arjuna, and through him all qualified souls, should repose unwavering faith in the Lord. It is with this idea that He uses the words "Te satyam pratijāne (I truly promise you)." That is to say, reposing firm faith in the assurance of the Lord that one who

pursues the course of discipline suggested above surely realizes Him, a man should strive his level best to attain the qualifications mentioned in the verse.

The words "Me priyaḥ asi" are intended to justify the assurance given by the loving Lord in the words "Te satyam pratijāne." What He means to say is that it was His love for Arjuna that compelled Him to give the above assurance in order to strengthen his faith; otherwise there was no need for Him to do so.*

* Who can glorify the high-souled Arjuna, for whose sake God Himself delivered with His own lips the divine message of the Gītā. In the *Udyoga-Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* we read as follows:—

एष नारायणः कृष्णः फाल्गुनश्च नरः स्मृतः । नारायणो नरश्चैव सत्त्वमेकं दिधा कृतम् ॥

(49. 20)

"Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the divine sage Nārāyaṇa Himself and Arjuna has been declared as Nara (the twin-born brother of Nārāyaṇa). Nārāyaṇa and Nara are one life manifested in two forms."

Our object here is to show how great was the love the Lord bore towards Arjuna. This itself will indicate how dearly he was loved by Arjuna.

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa was a close companion of Arjuna and often remained by his side even during his excursions into the forest and his sports in water, at the royal court as well as during sacrificial performances etc. They were on such intimate terms with each other that even in their domestic life one came across scenes of free interchange of pure and unadulterated love between them. Returning from the camp of the Pāṇḍavas, Sañjaya, King Dhṛtarāṣṭra's minister, gave the following account to his master:—

"I have seen unique love between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. In order to have a talk with them I called at their inner apartment in a most humble spirit! I saw there the two noble souls seated on a most precious seat, clad in rich costumes and adorned with costly jewels. In the lap of Arjuna rested the feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, while Arjuna's own feet rested in the lap of Draupadī (the common consort of the Pāṇḍavas) and Satyabhāmā (Śrī Kṛṣṇa's consort). Finding me there Arjuna pushed the gold stool from beneath his feet towards me and beckoned to me to take my seat on it. I touched it with reverence and squatted on the floor."

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa called on the Pāṇḍavas in the forest and in course of His conversation He spoke to Arjuna thus:—

ममेव त्वं तवैवाहं ये मदीयास्तवैव ते । यस्त्वां देष्टि स मां देष्टि यस्त्वामनु स मामनु ॥

(Mahā., Vana., XII. 45)

"Arjuna, you are Mine and I am yours. Those who are Mine are wholly and solely yours. In other words, whatever is Mine belongs to you. He who is on inimical terms with you is My enemy; and whoever is devoted to you is devoted to Me."

When Bhiṣma had mowed down the Pāṇḍava army for nine days, Yudhiṣṭhira approached the Lord at night and said to Him in great perturbation, "Śrī Kṛṣṇa, our encounter with Bhiṣma is just like the rushing of moths into the burning flame for being devoured by it. Now tell me what to do." To this Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa comfortingly said, "Be not worried. Tell Me and I will dispose of Bhiṣma. Rest assured that Arjuna will kill him." Then, revealing the tie of love which bound Him to Arjuna, the Lord said:—

Not only does the man who practises that He is easy of realization through in a full measure all the four items mentioned above attain God; but the practice of even one of these can lead to God-Realization. For the Lord Himself declares in verse 14 of Chapter VIII mere exclusive thought; verse 23 of Chapter VII and verse 25 of Chapter IX state that he who is solely devoted to the Lord eventually attains Him; while verses 26 to 28 of Chapter IX and verse

तव भ्राता मम सखा सम्बन्धी शिष्य एव च । मांसान्युत्कृत्य दास्यामि फाल्गुनार्थे महीपते ॥

एष चापि नरव्याघ्रो मत्कृते जीवितं त्यजेत् । एष नः समयस्तात तारयेम परस्परम् ॥

(Mahā., Bhīṣma., 107. 33-34)

“O king! your brother, Arjuna, is My friend, relation and disciple too. I can cut My own flesh and part with it for the sake of Arjuna. And this tiger among men can as well lay down his life for My sake. We have pledged our word, dear cousin, that we shall stand by each other till the end.”

This can furnish some clue to the tie of uncommon love that bound Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna.

Karṇa was in possession of an infallible weapon (a kind of lancet) which he had received from Indra, the lord of paradise. The latter had told him that the warrior at whom he hurled it would surely die. But he could use the missile only once. Karṇa had kept the lancet in reserve for being used against Arjuna. Duryodhana and others repeatedly urged him to use the missile against Arjuna and kill him outright. Karṇa himself would feel inclined to do so. But as soon as he came face to face with Arjuna, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who occupied the charioteer's box in the latter's car, cast such a spell on Karṇa that he forgot to discharge the missile. When Ghaṭotkacha, Bhīma's son from a demon wife, played havoc among the Kaurava army by his demoniac stratagems, Duryodhana and others were all unnerved. They all exclaimed with one voice, “First dispose of this wretch by hurling Indra's missile, so that we may be spared. At this dead of night if this demon finishes us all, of what avail would that missile be to us, which you have specially reserved for Arjuna?” Therefore, Karṇa felt constrained to hurl the missile at Ghaṭotkacha, who died instantaneously. His death cast a gloom over the entire Pāṇḍava family. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, however, was immensely pleased. As if maddened with joy He clasped Arjuna to His bosom again and again. Later on He took Sātyaki into His confidence and said, ‘Sātyaki, on the battlefield it was I who kept Karṇa spell-bound. That is why he could not discharge the missile against Arjuna so far. So long as the missile, which was capable of despatching Arjuna, remained with Karṇa, I was in perpetual anxiety. Anxiety played so much on My nerves that I could not get a wink of sleep at night, nor did I ever have a gleam of joy. Seeing that infallible weapon used up today, I deem Arjuna to have escaped the jaws of death. Look here, My beloved parents, friends and kinsmen like you and My own life are not dearer to Me than Arjuna. In the field of battle protection of Arjuna's life is more essential in My eyes than that of any other life. I would not barter away Arjuna even for anything which is more valuable than the kingdom of the three worlds. Today I cannot contain Myself for joy to see Arjuna reborn as it were.”

त्रैलोक्यराज्याद् यत्किंचिद् भवेदन्यत्सुदुर्लभम् । नेच्छेयं सात्वताहं तद्विना पार्थ धनंजयम् ॥

अतः प्रहर्षः सुमहान् युयुधानाथ मेऽभवत् । मृतं प्रत्यागतमिव दृष्ट्वा पार्थ धनंजयम् ॥

(Mahā., Droṇa., 182. 44-45)

The friendship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna was so well-known that Duryodhana himself once said:—

आत्मा हि कृष्णः पार्थस्य कृष्णस्यात्मा धनंजयः । यद् ब्रूयादर्जुनः कृष्णं सर्वं कुर्यादसंशयम् ॥

कृष्णो धनंजयस्यार्थे स्वर्गलोकमपि त्यजेत् । तथैव पार्थः कृष्णार्थे प्राणानपि परित्यजेत् ॥

(Mahā., Sabhā., 52. 31-33)

46 of the present chapter declare Him as dentally involves the practice of other attainable through mere worship. Of limbs too; and the feeling of reverence course, it is true that the specific practice and devotion is involved in the practice of any one of the aforesaid items inci- of all these limbs.

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ ६६ ॥

सर्वधर्मान् all duties; परित्यज्य resigning (to Me); एकम् only; माम् Me (the all-powerful and all-supporting Lord); शरणं ब्रज take refuge in; अहम् I; त्वा you; सर्वपापेभ्यः of all sins; मोक्षयिष्यामि shall absolve; मा शुचः worry not.

Resigning all your duties to Me, the all-powerful and all-supporting Lord, take refuge in Me alone. I shall absolve you of all sins, worry not. (66)

The compound word 'Sarvadharmān' by the term 'Sarvakarmāṇi' in verse 57 of in this verse denotes all those duties the present chapter. Laying down all these enjoined by the Śāstras, which have been duties in God in the manner suggested prescribed for a particular man according in the commentary on the verses mentioned to his grade in society, stage in life, above is what is meant by the verb temperament and circumstances, and 'Parityajya'. For, while discussing the which have been referred to in verse 6 conception of 'Tyāga' in the course of of Chapter XII as 'Sarvāṇi Karmāṇi' and this chapter, the Lord has unequivocally

"Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the soul of Arjuna and Arjuna, the soul of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa would do all that Arjuna might ask Him to do; there is no doubt about it. Śrī Kṛṣṇa can forgo even the celestial world for the sake of Arjuna; even so Arjuna can give up his very life for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sake."

There are many more episodes illustrative of the ideal love between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. For them the reader is referred to the relevant portions of the *Mahābhārata* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*.

It was due to this exceptional love of Arjuna that the Lord had to unfold to him the most hidden secret of His integral being known by the name of Puruṣottama or the Supreme Person, which is even more secret than the all comparatively esoteric wisdom. And it was for this love that, even in the Supreme Abode of the Lord, Arjuna obtained the most rare privilege of personal service to the Lord, which is coveted by the greatest Vedantists and exponents of the Vedas. After his ascent to heaven the pious king Yudhiṣṭhira, who had attained a super-celestial body, saw in the Supreme Abode of the Lord:—

ददर्श तत्र गोविन्दं ब्राह्मेण वपुषान्वितम् । दीप्यमानं स्ववपुषा दिव्यैरस्त्रैरुपस्थितम् ॥

चक्रप्रभृतिभिर्घोरैर्दिव्यैः पुरुषविग्रहैः । उपासमानं वीरेण फाल्गुनेन स्ववर्चसा ॥

(*Mahā., Swarga., IV. 2-4*)

"Bhagavān Śrī Govinda is endowed there with His own Brahmic or purely spiritual Body, which is all refulgence. His divine weapons such as the Discus, and other formidable missiles are waiting upon Him in their super-celestial human semblances!" The most glorious and heroic Arjuna is also attending upon Him." Such is the 'supreme reward' of carefully hearing, grasping and assimilating the philosophy of the Gītā. And it is quite in the fitness of things that a man like Arjuna, who was not only self-controlled, most selfless, talented and wise but also the supremely beloved friend, servant and disciple of the Lord, should obtain the 'supreme reward'.

declared in verse 7 that it is not justifiable to abandon one's allotted duties, so that giving them up through ignorance is what has been characterized as Tamasic Tyāga. Therefore, by no stretch of imagination can the word 'Parityajya' be interpreted in the sense of abandoning all duties.

Besides this, the Lord has commanded Arjuna at more than one places (III. 30; VIII. 7; XI. 34) not to desist from fighting, which is a sacred duty with the Kṣatriyas, but to participate in war resigning all duties to Him. And having carefully listened to the Gītā, Arjuna himself not only expresses his willingness to do His bidding in verse 73 of the present chapter, but actually participated in the Mahābhārata war and thus discharged his sacred obligation. 'Sarvadharmān parityajya' should, therefore, be taken to mean laying down all one's duties in the Lord, and not actually giving them up. And the man who has laid down his duties in the Lord regards everything as belonging to Him; and completely renouncing the feeling of 'I' and 'mine', as well as attachment and desire in respect of his mind, senses and body and with regard to all actions performed by them as well as to their fruit, continues to perform such duties only for His sake and according to His behests and prompting like a mere tool in His hands.

Having resigned all his duties to God in the above manner, the devotee who has solely taken refuge in the Lord regards Him as his supreme goal, safest retreat, chief support, dearest object of love, greatest well-wisher, most intimate friend and nearest relative, and looks upon Him as his supporter, lord and guardian. He constantly thinks of Him at all times with supreme reverence and exclusive love even while sitting or

standing, awake or asleep, eating and drinking, walking and moving from one place to another and carrying out His behests in every way. He ever remains contented with His dispensation and like the celebrated devotee, Prahlāda, entirely depends on Him and Him alone. All this is covered by taking refuge in the Lord. The idea has been clearly brought out in the commentary on verse 6 of Chapter XII, the concluding verse of Chapter IX and verse 57 of this very chapter.

The word 'Pāpa' forming part of the compound word 'Sarvapāpebhyah' in this verse stands for the bondage of action in the shape of fruits of good and evil deeds, under which this Jiva or embodied soul has been revolving from birth to birth through different species of life; and the absolution from sins referred to here consists in freeing one from the above bondage. Therefore, the idea underlying the freedom from sins promised by the Lord is the same as has been conveyed in verse 31 of Chapter III by the words 'Karmabhiḥ muchyante', by the words 'Mṛtyusaṃsārasāgarāt samuddhartā bhavāmi' in verse 7 of Chapter XII, and by the words 'Matprasādāt sarvadurgāṇi tarīyasi' in verse 58 of the present chapter.

The Lord winds up the teaching of the Gītā by comforting Arjuna in the words "Mā Śucaḥ" (worry not). Concluding with these words the teaching which He commenced in verse 11 of Chapter II with the words 'Aśocyān' (not worth grieving for), the Lord exhorts Arjuna, who had already betaken himself to Him, to surrender himself completely and thereby be rid of all worries, and having shed all grief and fear, abandon himself to His care for ever. This total absence of sorrow and realization of God form the principal theme of the Gītā.

Having thus concluded the teaching of the Gītā, the Lord now seeks to

glorify the teaching and the study etc. of this gospel and with this end in view He first points out the marks of him who is unqualified for the same and forbids Arjuna to impart the teaching to such a man.

इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन ।

न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति ॥ ६७ ॥

ते by you; इदम् this (secret gospel of the Gītā); कदाचन never; न neither; अतपस्काय to a man who lacks penance; न nor; अभक्ताय to him who is not devoted; न च nor again; अशुश्रूषवे to him who is unwilling to hear; वाच्यम् should be imparted; च and; यः who (to him); माम् Me; अभ्यसूयति finds fault with; न never (should it be imparted).

This secret gospel of the Gītā should never be imparted to a man who lacks penance, nor to him who is wanting in devotion, nor even to him who lends not a willing ear; and in no case to him who finds fault with Me. (67)

The demonstrative pronoun 'Idam' in this verse covers the entire range of the Lord's teachings imparted to Arjuna from verse 11 of Chapter II to the preceding verse with a view to expounding the truth of His own virtues, glory, mystery and essential character. In order to determine the eligibility for receiving this gospel the Lord forbids Arjuna to repeat it to those who labour under the four disqualifications mentioned in this verse. Out of the four types of unqualified persons referred to above the Lord mentions first of all him who lacks austerity. By shutting out this man from the portals of the Gītā the Lord seeks to impress upon Arjuna that the gospel of the Gītā is an extremely profound secret, that Arjuna was His most loving devotee and endowed with divine virtues, hence He had confided it to him in his own interest, recognizing him as qualified to receive it. Therefore He warns Arjuna not to repeat the Gītā, replete as it is with an exposition of His virtues, glory and reality, to a man who is not given to austerity in the form of discharging his own sacred obligations, who having

abandoned his duty has given himself over to sinful ways out of greed for worldly pleasures due to attachment for sensuous enjoyments. For such a man would be incapable of assimilating this teaching and would thereby bring dishonour to the same as well as to the Lord Himself.

The compound word 'Abhaktāya' stands for the unbeliever who has no faith in God, much less love or reverence for Him, and who regards himself as everything. The most esoteric gospel of the Gītā should not be delivered to such a man either; for being incapable of grasping its secret he would be unable to assimilate it.

Even if a man practises austerity in the shape of performing his sacred duties, but having no reverence and love for the teaching of the Gītā does not care to lend his ear to it, this most esoteric gospel should not be delivered to him. For a man of this type would get disgusted with it, and would not be able to appreciate it. Thereby he would only belittle the teaching as well as the Lord.

In no case should this teaching be repeated to a man who cavils at the Lord,—who has assumed a form with attributes for redeeming the world,—who paints His virtues as a vice and vilifies Him. For, being jealous of the Lord's virtues, glory and divinity, he would treat the Lord with even greater contempt and thereby aggravate his sin.

He who is free from all the four disqualifications mentioned in this verse

is unquestionably fully qualified to receive this gospel. Next to him, he who lacks penance in the form of devotion to his duty, but is free from the other three disqualifications is also eligible for it. And he too who is neither given to austerity nor fully devoted to the Lord, but who is willing to hear the Gītā, is qualified to a certain extent. He, however, who looks on the Lord with a carping eye or vilifies Him is absolutely unqualified.

Having thus pointed out the marks of him who is unqualified to receive the gospel of the Gītā, the Lord now tells Arjuna in the following two verses the reward and value of propagating it among His devotees.

य इमं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति ।

भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ॥ ६८ ॥

यः (he) who; मयि to Me; पराम् supreme; भक्तिम् love; कृत्वा having offered; परमम् गुह्यम् most secret; इमम् this (gospel of the Gītā); मद्भक्तेषु among My devotees; अभिधास्यति will preach; असंशयः without doubt; माम् Me; एव alone; एष्यति shall come to.

He who, offering the highest love to Me, preaches the most profound gospel of the Gītā among My devotees, shall come to Me alone; there is no doubt about it. (68)

The demonstrative adjective 'Imam' in this verse refers to the entire gospel of the Gītā. The use of the adjectives 'Paramam' and 'Guhyam' with reference to it is intended to show that this teaching, inasmuch as it secures freedom from the bondage of worldly existence and leads one to realize God Himself, is superb and esoteric.

Endowed with faith in God His devotees recognize Him as responsible for the creation, maintenance and destruction of the whole universe, all-powerful and the universal Lord, and love Him accordingly. They are eager to hear of His virtues, glory, pastimes and reality, and are delighted to hear the same. Such devotees are referred to here by the term 'Madbhaktesu'. The use of this

compound word is intended to determine the eligibility for receiving the gospel of the Gītā. The idea is that the devotee of God is automatically freed from all the four disqualifications referred to in the preceding verse. Therefore, a devotee of the Lord is the only fit recipient of this gospel and every person, to whatever grade in society and to whatever caste he may belong, can be a devotee of God (IX. 32). Hence the caste, creed and nationality etc. of a man are no bar to his eligibility. Possessed of extreme reverence for the Lord Himself or His utterances, a devotee of God is overwhelmed with love by the thought of His name, virtues, sports, glory and essential character and preaches the gospel of the Gītā among His devotees in a disinterested spirit for the sake of

His pleasure alone. That is to say, he gives them lessons on the original text of the Gītā, explains the meaning of its verses, helps them recite the text with correct intonation, brings out and elucidates the ideas contained in it, resolves the doubts of his audience and inculcates the truth of the Gītā upon their mind and awakens in them a strong impulse to translate into practice the teaching of the Gītā. All this is covered by preaching the gospel of the Gītā among His devotees with supreme devotion to Him.

A devotee of God, who propagates the ideas of the Lord among those who are qualified to receive them, in a disinterested spirit and with the sole object of attaining devotion to Him, doubtless reaches Him. That is to say, the above is an unfailing means to His realization; hence those qualified devotees who seek to attain Him must undertake the mission of preaching and popularizing the gospel of the Gītā.

न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिन्मे प्रियकृतमः ।

भविता न च मे तस्मादन्यः प्रियतरो भुवि ॥ ६९ ॥

तस्मात् than he; मे प्रियकृतमः doing a more loving service to Me; मनुष्येषु among human beings; कश्चित् anyone; न च there is not; च and; भुवि on the (entire) globe; तस्मात् than he; मे प्रियतरः dearer to Me; अन्यः (anyone) else; न neither; भविता shall be.

Among men there is none who does Me a more loving service than he; nor shall anyone be dearer to Me on the entire globe than he. (69)

The personal pronoun 'Tasmāt' in this verse refers to the pious and loving devotee of God, who has deep knowledge of the Gītā and preaches its gospel among His devotees as mentioned in the foregoing verses. Dissemination of His ideas among His devotees is dearer to the Lord than all other duties that endear one to Him, such as the performance of sacrifices and penance and practice of charity, service, worship, Japa (the repetition of sacred formulas) and meditation etc.; nothing in this world is so dear to the Lord as the mission referred to above. Therefore, he who disseminates His ideas among His devotees with reverence and devotion is dearer to Him than everyone else; none is dearer than he. Completely neglecting his own interests, he does only that which is dear to the Lord, hence he is exceptionally dear to Him. This is what

is meant by the first half of this verse.

The proclamation of the Lord that no one is dearer to Him than the devotee mentioned above does not refer to the present alone, it is equally true of the future as well. That is to say, it is hardly possible that anyone would be dearer to Him even at a future date. For when no other service is dearer to the Lord than the one in which he is engaged, how could anyone be more beloved of Him through any other practice? Therefore, of all the practices helpful to His realization, the mission of devoutly propagating His ideas among His devotees is the best. It is with this belief that the Lord expects His devotees to proceed with this noble work. This is what He seeks to convey in the latter half of the verse.

In this way in the preceding two verses the Lord pointed out the reward and value of propagating among His devotees the gospel of the Gītā in a reverent and devout spirit. Everyone, however, is not equal to the task; scarce anyone is qualified for it. Hence He now proceeds to glorify the study of the Gītā.

अध्येष्यते च य इमं धर्म्यं संवादमावयोः ।

ज्ञानयज्ञेन तेनाहमिष्टः स्यामिति मे मतिः ॥ ७० ॥

यः whosoever; इमम् this; धर्म्यम् sacred; आवयोः संवादम् our dialogue (in the form of the Gītā); अध्येष्यते will study; तेन by him; च as well; अहम् I; ज्ञानयज्ञेन through wisdom-sacrifice; इष्टः स्याम् shall be worshipped; इति such (is); मे My; मतिः mind.

Whosoever studies this sacred dialogue of ours in the form of the Gītā, by him too shall I be worshipped through wisdom-sacrifice: such is My mind. (70)

The demonstrative adjective 'Imam' along with the words 'Āvayoh samvādam' here refers to the text of the Gītā in the form of a dialogue between Arjuna and Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which has been characterized in verse 68 above as 'Paramam guhyam' (the most esoteric gospel). The use of the adjective 'Dharmyam' with reference to it is intended to convey that the gospel in question has been delivered by the divine Lord Himself; hence whatever has been taught therein is replete with virtue from beginning to end. It contains nothing which offends against righteousness or which is superfluous. Therefore, it is the paramount duty of man to follow the teachings embodied in it.

Receiving lessons on the holy Gītā from the devotees of God who are conversant with its inner meaning, reciting it daily, going through its translation in one's own language, pondering over its meaning and striving to grasp the same with the help of those who are in the know of it,—practice of all these is included in the study of this scripture.

Going through the translation of the Gītā side by side with reciting the text, and

daily recitation of the Gītā with an eye to its meaning is much better than going through the text or daily reciting it without following its meaning; and it is still better to be overwhelmed with love and get imbued with its spirit while going through or reciting the text in an intelligent way.

The latter half of this verse is intended to reveal the value of studying the Gītā in the aforesaid manner. The idea is that a study of this scripture enables one to acquaint oneself correctly and fully with the truth about the absolute and relative, as well as the manifest and unmanifest, aspects of the Divinity. Therefore, whoever studies the Gītā with the object of grasping the truth about the Lord will be deemed to worship Him through wisdom-sacrifice. The practice in the form of this wisdom-sacrifice has been recognized as far superior to other practices carried on with the help of material substances (IV. 33); for all practices culminate in the knowledge of the truth about God. And this consummation is easily reached through the wisdom-sacrifice referred to above, hence a seeker of beatitude should whole-heartedly devote himself to a study of the Gītā.

Having thus pointed out the value of a study of the holy Gītā, the Lord

now declares the reward of hearing it in the case of those who are unable to study it in the above manner.

श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः ।

सोऽपि मुक्तः शुभल्लोकान् प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यकर्मणाम् ॥ ७१ ॥

यः नरः the man who; श्रद्धावान् possessed of reverence; च and; अनसूयः free from cavilling; शृणुयात् should hear (the holy Gītā); अपि even; सः he; अपि too; मुक्तः absolved of (sins); पुण्यकर्मणाम् of the virtuous; शुभान् लोकान् the happy worlds; प्राप्नुयात् shall attain to.

The man who hears the holy Gītā with reverence and in an uncarping spirit,—liberated from sin, he too shall reach the happy worlds of the virtuous. (71)

The use of the word 'Narah' is intended to show that he who lacks the inclination even to hear with reverence the holy Gītā hardly deserves to be called a human being; for his human birth is proving fruitless. Therefore, he is only a beast in human form.

Believing in the existence of God as well as in His virtues and glory, and with a firm conviction that the holy Gītā is the word of God Himself, and that whatever has been said therein is absolute truth, and reposing faith in the exponent of the Gītā, the man who hears the original text or its exposition with love and eagerness is referred to here by the word 'Śraddhāvān'. And 'Anasūyaḥ' is he who does not find fault with the Lord or His utterance nor shows disrespect in any form to the holy Gītā while hearing it.

To say nothing of him who preaches the gospel of the Gītā among others as mentioned in verse 68, or of him who studies it himself as referred to in verse 70 above, even he who is merely able to hear it with faith is absolved of sin. Therefore, he who is unable to preach or even study it himself should make it a point at least to hear it.

The man who is thus given to hearing the Gītā is rid of all sins committed in successive previous lives,—which bring about one's birth among low-born creatures such as beasts and birds etc. and throw one into the infernal regions,—and obtains a residence in the higher worlds from Indra's heaven onward to the supreme abode of God according to the degree of his faith and devotion. This is what is meant by the latter half of this verse.

Having thus glorified the preaching, recitation and hearing of the holy Gītā, the Lord now enquires of Arjuna his reactions to the above just in order to awaken him to his real situation, although He knew everything Himself.

कश्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा ।

कश्चिदज्ञानसंमोहः प्रनष्टस्ते धनंजय ॥ ७२ ॥

पार्थ O son of Prithā (Kunti), Arjuna; कश्चित् whether; एतत् this (gospel of the Gītā); त्वया by you; एकाग्रेण चेतसा with one-pointed mind; श्रुतम् has been heard; धनंजय O conquerer of riches, Arjuna; कश्चित् whether; ते your; अज्ञानसंमोहः delusion born of ignorance; प्रनष्टः has disappeared.

Have you heard this gospel of the Gitā with one-pointed mind, Arjuna? And has your delusion born of ignorance melted away, O conquerer of riches? (72)

The demonstrative pronoun 'Etat' in this verse covers the entire range of the most esoteric divine teaching imparted by the Lord from verse 11 of Chapter II to verse 66 of the present chapter. It is in order to impress upon Arjuna the importance of this teaching that the Lord asks him the question embodied in the first half of this verse. The idea is that the above teaching of the Lord is something very rare; He could not acknowledge His divinity to everybody or ask anyone and everyone to seek refuge in Him. He, therefore, was naturally anxious to know whether Arjuna had carefully and attentively heard His teachings; for should he have missed it, he had certainly committed an egregious blunder.

Now, if Arjuna had carefully heard the teaching, it must have borne its fruit. He, therefore, reminded Arjuna how he had complained of his being puzzled about his duty (II. 7), how he had reckoned it a sin to discharge his sacred obligation (I. 36),

how he had preferred to live on alms abandoning all his duties (II. 5), how he had felt perturbed at the thought of killing his own kinsmen (I. 45-47) and how he had been at a loss to determine the course of his action (II. 6-7),—which had all been due to his mind being warped by infatuation,—and was accordingly anxious to know whether that infatuation had left him. Should he have given an attentive ear to His teaching, his mind must have been cleared of the cloud of infatuation. And in case it had not been dispelled, that clearly showed absence of attentiveness on his part.

The above two questions of the Lord are impregnated with the lesson that a man should devote himself to the study and hearing of the holy Gitā with a careful and attentive mind; and till he is completely disabused of the delusion born of his ignorance he should think that he has not correctly grasped the teaching of the Lord, so that it is essential to ponder it with reverence.

Thus enquired by the Lord, Arjuna conveys his reactions to Him, expressing his gratitude.

अर्जुन उवाच

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत ।

स्थितोऽस्मि गतसंदेहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥ ७३ ॥

अच्युत O infallible Lord; त्वत्प्रसादात् by Your grace; मोहः (my) delusion; नष्टः is dispelled; मया by me; स्मृतिः wisdom; लब्धा gained; गतसंदेहः freed from doubt; स्थितः अस्मि I stand; तव Your; वचनम् bidding; करिष्ये will do.

Arjuna said: Kṛṣṇa, by Your grace my delusion has fled and wisdom has been gained by me. I stand shorn of all doubts. I will do Your bidding. (73)

Arjuna has now come to realize that immortal God. This is what he seeks to convey by addressing Him as 'Achyuta' (infallible Lord).

Arjuna gratefully answers the question of the Lord, contained in the preceding verse, in the words 'Naṣṭaḥ Mohaḥ'. Arjuna thereby acknowledges his immense obligation to the Lord for the divine gospel so kindly delivered by Him, and assures the Lord that his delusion,—which was due to his want of correct knowledge about the Lord's virtues, glory, divinity and essential character, and which prevented him from carrying out the Lord's behests (II. 9) and flustered him at the thought of the impending destruction of his kinsmen (I. 28-47),—had completely left him.

With the disappearance of delusion, born of his ignorance, the light of divine wisdom had dawned in his mind, the memory of the virtues, glory, divinity and essential character of the Lord had been fully awakened, and His integral being had been revealed to him, leaving nothing unknown to him. This is what Arjuna seeks to impress on the Lord by

the words 'Smṛtiḥ Labdhā'.

Arjuna had now no doubt left in his mind about the virtues, glory and divinity of the Lord, and His absolute and relative as well as the manifest and unmanifest aspects, and even so about the nature of virtue and sin, and about what he should do and what he should abstain from, etc. In other words, all his doubts had been resolved, and in consequence of it the unsteadiness of his mind had completely vanished. This is what Arjuna means by the words "Sthitāḥ asmi gatasandehāḥ".

Lastly, Arjuna felt that by the Lord's grace he had attained the object of his life, and thus had no duty left for him. Therefore, he was prepared to do as the Lord bade him and would perform all his duties such as fighting etc. in the interest of the world order according to His directions by way of sport as a mere instrument. This is the idea conveyed by the words "Kariṣye vachanam tava".

Having thus repeated the holy Gītā in the form of a dialogue between Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna in response to the enquiry from Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Sañjaya now reveals to his master the glory of the Gītā in the following two verses while concluding his message.

संजय उवाच

इत्यहं वासुदेवस्य पार्थस्य च महात्मनः ।

संवादमिममश्रौषमद्भुतं

रोमहर्षणम् ॥ ७४ ॥

इति thus; अहम् I; वासुदेवस्य of Vāsudeva, Śrī Kṛṣṇa; च and; महात्मनः पार्थस्य of the high-souled Arjuna, son of Pṛthā (Kuntī); इमम् this; अद्भुतम् mysterious; रोमहर्षणम् (and) thrilling (lit., making the hair stand on their ends); संवादम् conversation; अश्रौषम् heard.

Sañjaya said: Thus I heard the mysterious and thrilling conversation between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the high-souled Arjuna, son of Kuntī. (74)

The particle 'Iti' marks the conclusion of the gospel of the Gītā.

The use of the epithet 'Vāsudeva' (lit., the all-pervading Spirit) for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and of the qualification 'Mahātmā' (high-souled or noble-minded) with reference to Arjuna is intended to glorify the Gītā. The idea is that this gospel

has been preached by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is no other than the all-pervading Divinity, the indweller of all hearts, in response to the enquiry from Arjuna, who is an incarnation of the divine sage Nara; hence it is highly valuable. No other sacred teaching can bear comparison with it; for it is the quintessence of all scriptures or sacred books.*

* गीता सुगीता कर्तव्या किमन्यैः शास्त्रविस्तारैः । या स्वयं पञ्चनाभस्य मुखपद्मादिनिःसृता ॥

(Mahā., Bhīṣma., 43. 1)

The dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna has been spoken of as mysterious because it enables one to realize the integral Divinity, possessed of wonderful and transcendent virtues, glory and supernatural powers. And even as a man hears and understands it he is filled with delight and wonder, which make his hair stand on their end. Hence it has been called 'Romaharṣaṇam'. Sañjaya feels proud that he has been able to hear with his own ears such a wonderful dialogue.

व्यासप्रसादाच्छ्रुतवानेतद् गुह्यमहं परम् ।

योगं योगेश्वरात्कृष्णात्साक्षात्कथयतः स्वयम् ॥ ७५ ॥

व्यासप्रसादात् (having been blessed with the divine vision) by the grace of Śrī Vyāsa; अहम् I; एतत् this; परम् गुह्यम् supremely esoteric; योगम् Yoga or wisdom; कथयतः imparting (it to Arjuna); योगेश्वरात् स्वयम् कृष्णात् from Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Yoga, Himself; साक्षात् before my very eyes; श्रुतवान् have heard.

Having been blessed with the divine vision by the grace of Śrī Vyāsa, I heard this supremely esoteric gospel from the Lord of Yoga, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, imparting it to Arjuna before my very eyes. (75)

The use of the compound word 'Vyāsaprasādāt' is intended to express Sañjaya's gratitude towards Maharṣi Vyāsa, who had so kindly gifted him with the divine vision, i. e., with the supernatural faculties of seeing what is out of sight, hearing what is out of hearing and grasping what is out of one's mental grasp. It was due to that supernatural gift that Sañjaya was enabled to hear the divine gospel of the Gītā, which he was otherwise incapable of hearing.

The demonstrative pronoun 'Etat' stands here for the holy Gītā in the form of the above dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. The use of the adjective 'Paramam' with reference to it is intended to bring out its superb character; and

'Guhyam' points to its esoteric nature, i. e., bangs its doors against the unqualified. The third adjective 'Yogam' indicates that the gospel contains a detailed exposition of Karmayoga, Jñānayoga, Dhyānayoga, Bhaktiyoga and other practices leading to God-Realization; and the gospel itself, i. e., even its devout recitation is an independent means of realizing God and hence deserves the title of 'Yoga'.

Lastly, Sañjaya tells Dhṛtarāṣṭra that the Gītā, which he had just repeated to the King, had not been received by him through a third agency but directly from the lotus-like lips of the almighty Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the controller of all Yogic powers.

Having thus revealed the value of hearing the most rare gospel of the Gītā, Sañjaya, while expressing his own reactions, glorifies the recollection of that gospel.

"The Gītā alone should be heard and chanted, studied and taught, as well as pondered and assimilated; collections of other scriptures are of no avail. For the Gītā has flowed from the lotus-like lips of no other than Bhagavān Viṣṇu, who bears a lotus on His navel."

राजन् संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य संवादमिममद्भुतम् ।

केशवार्जुनयोः पुण्यं हृष्यामि च मुहुर्मुहुः ॥ ७६ ॥

राजन् O king; केशवार्जुनयोः between Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna; इमम् this; अद्भुतम् marvellous; च and; पुण्यम् sacred; संवादम् conversation; संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य recollecting again and again; मुहुः मुहुः again and yet again; हृष्यामि I rejoice.

Remembering, over and over, that sacred and mystic conversation between Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, O king ! I rejoice again and yet again. (76)

The holy Gītā in the form of this mystic conversation between Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna purifies him who studies, teaches, hears, ponders and discourses on it, and does good to his soul in every way. Hence it has been characterized as 'Punyaṁ' (sacred). And it reveals the marvellous virtues, glory, divinity, truth, mystery and essential character of the Lord; hence it has been spoken of as 'Adbhutam'.

By giving his own reactions in this verse Sañjaya glorifies the recollection of the gospel of the Gītā. Sañjaya means to say that the gospel preached by the Lord had captivated his heart so much that he had lost his relish for anything else. He was reminded of that teaching again and again, and merged in the thought of it he was being transported with joy and overwhelmed with love.

Having thus glorified the recollection of the Gītā, Sañjaya while giving his further reactions, extols the recollection of the Cosmic Body of the Lord.

तच्च संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य रूपमत्यद्भुतं हरेः ।

विस्मयो मे महान् राजन् हृष्यामि च पुनः पुनः ॥ ७७ ॥

राजन् O king; हरेः of Śrī Hari; तत् that; अत्यद्भुतम् most wonderful; रूपम् Form; च also; संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य remembering again and again; महान् great; मे विस्मयः (is) my wonder; च and; पुनः पुनः again and yet again; हृष्यामि I rejoice.

Remembering also, again and again, that most wonderful Form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, great is my wonder and I rejoice over and over again. (77)

By hearing, pondering and singing the virtues, glory, exploits, divinity, greatness and the sacred names of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and by perceiving and touching His Form a man is rid of all sins. Association of any kind with Him frees one from all sins, ignorance and sorrows

and the Lord robs the devotee of his heart; hence He is termed as 'Hari'.

The word 'Rūpam' qualified by the adjectives 'Tat' and 'Atyadbhutam' refers to the most wonderful and divine Cosmic Body of the Lord, which He had revealed before Arjuna and the glory of whose

vision has been declared by the Lord Himself in verses 47 and 48 of Chapter XI.

The memory of that Cosmic Body of the Lord did not fade from the mind of Sañjaya, he was reminded of it again and again and wondered how he was vouchsafed a vision of that most rare and divine Form of the Lord. He had no merit to his

credit, which could earn him that unique privilege. The motiveless mercy of the Lord alone had entitled him to that privilege. A mental survey of the wonderful phenomena and events forming part of that vision filled him with wonder and awe at the marvellous Yogic power of the Lord.

Thus giving his own reactions and glorifying the gospel of the Gītā and the recollection of the marvellous Form of the Lord, Sañjaya now concludes this chapter indicating the certain prospect of the Pāṇḍavas' victory.

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।

तत्र श्रीविजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥ ७८ ॥

यत्र where; योगेश्वरः the Lord of Yoga; कृष्णः Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa; यत्र (and) where; धनुर्धरः the wielder of the Gāṇḍīva bow; पार्थः the son of Prthā (Kuntī), Arjuna; तत्र there; श्रीः goodness; विजयः victory; भूतिः glory; ध्रुवा नीतिः (and) unfailing righteousness; मम मतिः (such is) my conviction.

Wherever there is Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Yoga, and wherever there is Arjuna, the wielder of the Gāṇḍīva bow, goodness, victory, glory and unfailing righteousness are there: such is my conviction. (78)

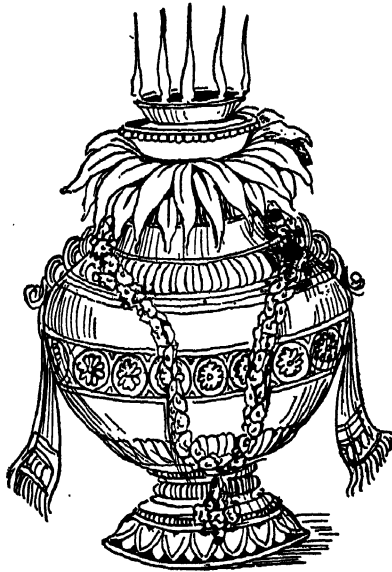
By using the epithet 'Yogेश्वराह' for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and 'Dhanurdharaḥ' for Arjuna, Sañjaya impresses upon King Dhṛtarāṣṭra the glory of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, and indicates the sure prospect of the Pāṇḍava's victory in order to awaken in the king's mind an inclination to negotiate peace. In other words, Sañjaya wanted to make it clear that Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa was the Lord of all Yogic powers and that He was capable of creating, maintaining and destroying the whole universe in a trice by dint of His Yogic power. There could be no doubt about the victory of King Yudhiṣṭhira, who had Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the manifest Divinity, as his supporter.

Besides this, Arjuna too was an incarnation of the divine sage Nara, a beloved friend of the Lord, and a great hero, the wielder of the famous Gāṇḍīva bow; he too had girded his loins to see his brother victorious. Hence there was none who could vie with Yudhiṣṭhira at that moment. For where the sun is, light must be there; even so the very presence of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna ensures all goodness, glory and righteousness. And laurels go to him who has virtue on his side. Therefore, the victory of the Pāṇḍavas was guaranteed. The welfare of Dhṛtarāṣṭra lay in bringing round his sons to seek peace with the Pāṇḍavas.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे मोक्षसंन्यासयोगो नामाष्टादशोऽध्यायः ॥१८॥

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the eighteenth chapter entitled "The Yōga of Liberation through the path of Knowledge and Self-surrender."

The Bhagavadgītā is the divine word of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the supreme Puruṣottama or God Himself, who is adored by the whole animate and inanimate kingdom, is full of the six divine properties, and is Bliss and Consciousness solidified. The scripture is a mine of endless mysteries. It is by the grace of the supremely compassionate Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa that its inner meaning can be partially understood. He alone who ponders the Gītā with a heart brimming over with supreme reverence and pure loving devotion directly perceives the grace of the Lord and can obtain a glimpse of the real character of the Gītā. Therefore, seekers of blessedness would do well to place before them the ideal of Arjuna, the prince among devotees, and cultivating his divine virtues should hear, study and ruminate over the Gītā with faith and devotion; and they should whole-heartedly devote themselves to spiritual practice according to their individual capacity in pursuance of the Lord's behests. Those who proceed on the above lines are inspired with ever new thoughts and feelings of a supremely blissful, unique and transcendent character. Attaining absolute purity of mind and enjoying the exceptional grace of the Lord, they speedily realize Him.



Editors' Apologia

The Editors of the *Kalyana-Kalpātaru* are extremely thankful to almighty and all-merciful God that by His grace, and through His help, they have at last completed their difficult undertaking of presenting the readers of the journal with an English translation of the 'Gita-Tattvānka' of the Hindi 'Kalyan', containing a detailed commentary on the Gītā from the pen of Śrī Jayadayal Goyandka, the founder and principal organizer of the Gita Press. The first six chapters of the Gītā, in this series, under the title of 'Gita-Tattva Number—I', appeared in January 1946; the second group of six chapters (Chapters VII to XII), under the title of 'Gita-Tattva Number—II', appeared in August 1947; and the present number, which is the inaugural number of volume XIV of the journal, gives a translation of the third group of six chapters (Chapters XIII to XVIII) under the title of 'Gita-Tattva Number—III'. Thus the entire Gītā has been covered in the three successive inaugural numbers of volumes XII, XIII and XIV of the journal; and it gives us extreme pleasure indeed to be able to place before our readers the present number, which represents the third or last number of the series.

The importance of the Gītā as a holy book is sufficiently known to our readers, and has been brought out in detail by the learned and saintly commentator in his Introduction, a translation of which appears at the beginning of this number. The universal character of Gītā's teachings is also recognized by all principal thinkers of the world. It would, therefore, be redundant on our part to expatiate on these points again. But in the context

of the present world situation and the trend of forces that are operating in it today, we feel it our duty to draw the attention of our readers to some unfavourable circumstances which require to be guarded against for the protection of the Gītā and all it stands for; and we trust thinkers of the world and Indians in general will unite to extend the needed protection to this efflorescence of Indian culture and civilization by watering the roots from which it has sprung, and not allow it to wither by diverting the sap, from which it derived sustenance, to other channels.

And, first of all, it should be recognized that in spite of its universal appeal, the Gītā is an expression of Indian culture and civilization at its best. Just as the Kaustubha jewel emanated out of the churning of the ocean, even so this jewel of the Gītā has come out of the divine lips after the churning of the ocean-like scriptures, consisting of the Śrutis, Smṛtis, Itihāsas and Purāṇas. That is why it is the essence of the scriptures, the epitome of the Śāstras. It is the efflorescence of the tree of the scriptures. All the qualities, virtues, principles and elements of the scriptures are found embodied in it, as the qualities and virtues of the tree are found concentrated in the flower which bears the seed. That is how it throws light on the scriptures, and the scriptures throw their light on it. This relation is organic and cannot be disturbed without injury to either. The disciplines of life which they put forward are also, similarly, organically related to the goal they drive at, which, therefore, cannot be reached without the help of

those disciplines. Bereft of the scriptures, on the one hand, and, on the other, the disciplines of life the Gītā and the scriptures jointly advocate, the Gītā cannot stand.

But both these props are seriously threatened today from two sides, viz., (1) from Eclecticism and (2) from the materialistic philosophy of modern Socialism.

Eclecticism has grown out of the mixture of cultures attendant upon the conquest of space by modern locomotion, resulting in peoples and races of the world being thrown closer and closer together and losing their particular traits and characteristics in a common feature that has led more to the vulgarization of life than to its fineness and refinement. In its positive aspect, it is leading to the growth of a world outlook, and in its negative aspect to a levelling down of life and culture. It acknowledges only one form of loyalty, viz., the loyalty to reason, holding other forms of loyalty as either superstition or useless accretion. It believes in culling the good features of all and making a fine flower bouquet of thoughts, without realizing the fact that a bouquet is not an organic growth and is devoid of the backing of the life-principle, and is therefore bound to wither in course of time. The short life of a bouquet, however beautiful to look at in the beginning, should be a sufficient warning against eclecticism; but as it is a creation of the peculiar circumstances of the age, it rules the field, and has gripped the mass-mind as a modern craze. The weakness of eclecticism lies in the fact that it has no organic element in it; and apart from being a solvent to the stern disciplines that lead to spiritual growth, it is forced by its nature to a shortlived existence. And yet at present it

is a menace to Indian culture and civilization and all that it stands for, and as such it constitutes a distinct threat to the teachings of the Gītā also, and to the disciplines of spiritual culture advocated by it.

From the point of view of the materialistic philosophy of modern Socialism, spiritual culture itself is an anathema and curse, inasmuch as it tends to make the mind of man assume an introvert character. According to this school, man's primary duty being the conquest of nature, the idea of spiritual culture, and all that it involves, should be thrown into the scrap-heap. The Gītā, therefore, can hardly expect to find a place in their scheme of things. The value of ancient books like the Gītā, according to the thinkers of this school, may, therefore, lie only in their antiquarian interest. They can never tolerate the idea of giving the Gītā an honourable place in the life of the people, and thereby undermine the very foundation of their system of thought.

These are the two fronts which may constitute serious points of attack against the Gītā and its courses of discipline and spiritual culture; and this should be taken serious cognizance of by all right-thinking men in India, so that in the wake of our political freedom we may not be forced by circumstances to lose the very soul of our culture, which the Gītā is, for a mess of pottage. With clasped hands we offer our humble prayers to the almighty Lord, the Revealer of the Gītā, that this chosen land of His may be spared that ordeal. We also bow our heads to all sages and seers and crave their blessings on us and our beloved land, which is passing through a period of transition, and hope that through their grace the clouds will soon roll away.

In preparing the present translation we did our best to adhere closely to the original composition of the learned author in Hindi; but we are aware that due to our own shortcomings and the difficult nature of the subject we have hardly been able to do justice to our task. The exigencies of translation gave us little freedom in the choice of words which may not appear happy to many readers at various places. Nevertheless, we shall regard the termination of our task unfortunate, if the defects in the translation go in any way to detract from the value of the original composition of the revered author of this commentary. We, therefore, humbly beseech our readers to give credit for all that appears good in this translation to the

solidity of thought of the original writer himself, and lay the blame for all defects on our head.

All the members of our editorial staff, and some other intimate friends, worked incessantly with us to bring this heavy work to a successful end. We do not know how to thank them adequately for their disinterested labours. As mention of any one of them by name is likely to cause them embarrassment, we have to refrain from the same. But we have no doubt that by their disinterested labour they have earned the pleasure and grace of the beloved Deity of their heart, the divine author of the supernal Song, at whose feet we dedicate our humble undertaking.



Sri Gita-Ramayana-Prachara-Sangha

(A Society for Popularizing the Study of the Gītā and the Rāmāyaṇa)

Bhagavadgītā or the "Song Divine" and the Hindi Rāmācharitamānasa of Goswami Tulasidas are two rare literary gems, not only of this country but of the whole world. Their value and debt to the human race cannot be over-estimated. At the present juncture, when the very existence of Dharma is threatened on all sides and unrest and turmoil prevail everywhere, it is these two works that can help to usher an era of happiness and tranquillity in the world. The best way to popularize these immortal works is to encourage their admirers and lovers to read and study them in as large numbers as possible and, deriving utmost benefit from their lofty teachings, to help themselves as well as others attain salvation. It is with this end in view that the above Society has been brought into existence with the concurrence of Sri Jayadaya Goyandka.

RULES

- (1) The object of the Society is to propagate the ideas of the Gītā and the Rāmāyaṇa.
- (2) Members who take to the study and recitation of these works themselves, and also induce others to do the same, would be recognized as the Promoters of the Society.
- (3) The Society has two centres, one at the Gita Bhavan in Rishikesh (Dehradun), and the other at the Gita Press in Gorakhpur.
- (4) The Organizer of the Society is authorized to co-opt any person as a member or promoter by virtue of his or her special qualifications with the latter's consent, and to amend or add to the rules as and when necessary.

(5) The Society will have two sections—(1) the Gītā Section and (2) the Rāmāyaṇa Section.

(6) Members who join the Gītā Section will have the following five grades:—

1. Those who devoutly undertake one full recitation of the Gītā daily. They will have performed 360 Wisdom-sacrifices (Jñānayajñas) in the course of a year.*
2. Those who undertake to recite with devotion nine chapters of the Gītā daily, *i. e.*, Chapters I-IX and X-XVIII on alternate days. They will have to their credit 180 Jñānayajñas at the end of a year.
3. Those who devoutly recite six chapters of the holy Gītā every day, *i. e.*, Chapters I-VI on the first day, Chapters VII-XII on the second and Chapters XIII-XVIII on the third, and follow the same order throughout the year. They will have performed 120 Wisdom-sacrifices in the course of a year.

N. B. A year will be calculated from the date or 'Tithi' (lunar day) on which the recitation is commenced and will be deemed to expire on the day preceding the same date or Tithi of the next year.

4. (a) Those who fondly and intelligently recite one chapter of the Gītā daily, that is to say, who recite the first eleven chapters from the first to the eleventh lunar day of every month of the Hindu calendar, Chapters XII and XIII on the 12th, Chapters XIV and XV on the 13th, Chapters XVI and XVII on the 14th and Chapter XVIII on the full-moon day or the day preceding the new moon (Amāvasyā). In this way they will be required to complete two full recitations of the Gītā in a month—one during the dark, and the other during the bright fortnight. If there are sixteen days during any particular fortnight, Chapters XVI and XVII should be recited separately in two days rather than in one; and if, on the contrary, any particular fortnight consists of only 14 days, Chapter VII and VIII should be read together on the same day. The idea is that two Jñānayajñas must be performed in the course of a month. And—
4. (b) Those who undertake eighteen full recitations of the Gītā every year and complete them in two terms. The first term should commence from the 2nd or 3rd of the bright half of Mārgaśīrṣa and end on the 11th (the Gītā-Jayanti day), while the other should commence from the 2nd or 3rd of the bright half of Jyēṣṭha and end on the 11th (Nirjalā Ekādaśī). Nine recitations should be completed in the course of each term, at the

* The Lord Himself says in the Gītā:—

अध्येष्यते च य इमं धर्म्यं संवादमावयोः । शानयन्नेन तेनाहमिष्टः स्यामिति मे मतिः ॥

(XVIII. 70)

Whosoever studies this sacred dialogue of ours in the form of the Gītā, by him too shall I be worshipped through wisdom-sacrifice: such is My mind.

rate of one per day. If it is not possible to undertake the recitations on the dates specified above, eighteen recitations may be completed in one or two terms during any part of the year. In this way 42 Jñānayajñas in all should be performed in the course of a year.

5. Those who devote at least one hour daily to a deep study of the Gītā with a view to moulding their life according to its teachings.

Every reciter of the Gītā would do well, if possible, to read and ruminate regularly and devoutly every day on the commentary of a couple of verses from the "Gītā-Tattva Number" (I-III), or the 'Gītā-Tattva-Vivechanī' in Hindi published by the Gita Press.

(7) Members joining the Rāmāyaṇa Section will have the following three grades:—

1. Those who undertake to complete one full recitation of the Rāmācharitāmānasa in nine days, stopping every day at the place mentioned in the Edition published by the Gita Press.
2. Those who finish one full reading of the Rāmācharitāmānasa in the course of a month, stopping each day at the place marked in the Gita Press edition.
3. Those who devoutly and intelligently recite every day at least seven Dohās, along with the intervening Chaupais and Chhandas, of the Rāmācharitāmānasa. Commencing the recitation on the 10th of the bright half of Chaitra, they should complete one full reading of the text on the 9th of the bright half of Āśvina; and resuming the recitation on the 10th of the bright half of Āśvina, they should complete a second reading on the 9th of the bright half of Chaitra. In this way they should finish at least two full recitations of the whole Rāmācharitāmānasa within a year. Intending members should commence the recitation as soon as they decide to join the Society. The part of the reading that they are able to finish before the 9th of the bright half of Āśvina this year, even though it will not be counted in the recitations for this year, will nevertheless do good to the readers; for the more they read from this book the more they will be benefited thereby.

(8) Prospective members are requested to mention the section and grade they intend to join, and send their full name and address to the office of the Society.

(9) Membership of the Society is open to all, irrespective of their sex, age, caste or Āśrama. Pleasure of the Lord should be the sole motive guiding the reciters.

(10) Communications should be addressed to either of the following:—

1. The Secretary, Śrī Gītā-Rāmāyaṇa-Prachāra-Sangha, Gita Bhavan, Rishikesh (Dehradun).
2. The Organizer, Śrī Gītā-Rāmāyaṇa-Prachāra-Sangha, Gita Press, Gorakhpur.



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Kalyana-Kalpataru

BUSINESS RULES

1. The "Kalyana-Kalpataru" is published every month of the English calendar. Each ordinary number will contain 32 pages of printed matter besides the title sheets and one tricoloured illustration. Every August number is a Special Number dealing with some particular theme.

2. Commercial advertisements are not accepted for publication in the Magazine.

3. Change of address should be communicated before the 1st of every month. Subscribers are requested to mention their number and old address when sending intimation of a change of address. Temporary change of address should be arranged with the local Post Office.

4. Remittances and correspondence relating to management, subscription etc. should be addressed to the Manager. Letters connected with the publication of articles are to be addressed to the Editor.

5. The annual subscription is payable strictly in advance. Subscribers are not enrolled for less than a year. The period of subscription is counted from August to July.

6. The Magazine publishes only articles that are helpful in promoting spiritual welfare. It welcomes contributions on subjects like Bhakti, Jñāna and Vairāgya, or biographies of saints who are no more on earth. Articles containing personal attacks or aspersions are not accepted. The Editors reserve to themselves the right of curtailing or supplementing, where necessary, or of publishing, or withholding publication of articles. Unpublished articles are not returned unless asked for. The Editors are not responsible for the statements or opinions of contributors.

The Manager

Kalyana-Kalpataru

Gītā, the Wish-yielding Tree

मोक्षशास्त्रं परमं धर्मैकनिलयं
विद्वान् वेदार्थं सकलं संगृह्य कथितम् ।
सर्वं भाषयन् सुमित्रं तत्त्वेन विद्वन्ना
जपाद् ध्यानाद्भुतमपि फलस्येव सुविधाम् ॥

—Sādānanda

"The holy Gītā is the sole repository of the supreme object of human endeavour—Mokṣa. Through a devoted study of the Gītā alone the Supreme Person, God, may be realized. The all-pervading Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, who is no other than the supreme Eternal, the main theme of the Vedas, has summed up in this work the truth of the entire Veda, consisting of its three sections dealing with Ritual, Worship and Knowledge. To the intelligent man who recites its text, ponders its meanings, assimilates its contents through a deep study or merely hears it read, the holy Gītā yields the desired fruit."